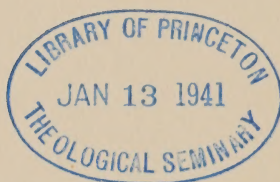
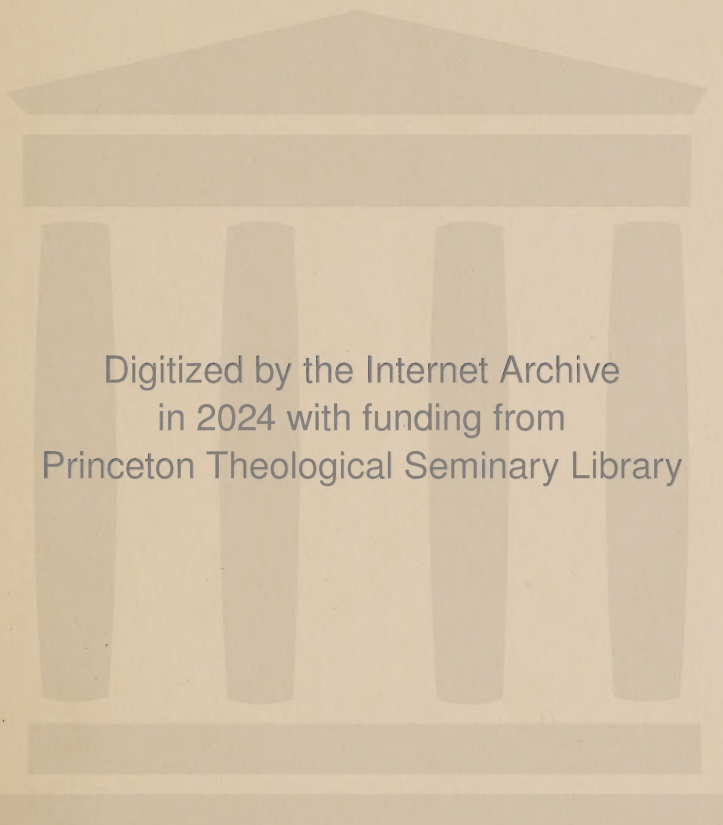


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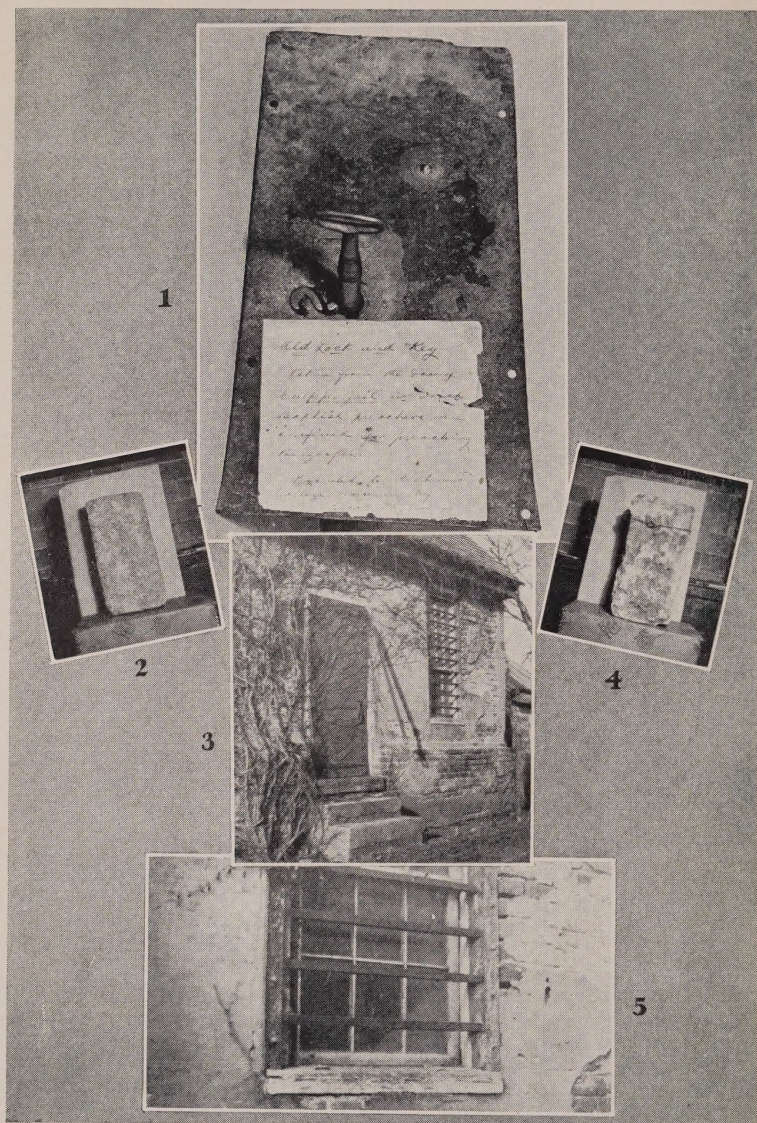
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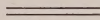
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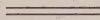
IMPRISONED PREACHERS *and* RELIGIOUS LIBERTY *in* VIRGINIA

A Narrative Drawn Largely from the Official Records
of Virginia Counties, Unpublished Manuscripts,
Letters, and Other Original Sources

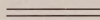


By
LEWIS PEYTON LITTLE

With an Introduction by
REV. R. H. PITT, D. D., LL. D.
Editor *Religious Herald* for Forty-nine Years



*"Not to their crowns may we aspire,
But to their deathless, high desire."*



1938
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LYNCHBURG, VA.

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By LEWIS PEYTON LITTLE

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DEDICATED

to

All Those Heroes of the Cross
Who Suffered for Conscience Sake;
All Their Descendants; and
All Others Who Are Now Enjoying
The Fruit of Their Labors—
Religious Liberty.

PREFACE

In the continued and uninterrupted use of any great blessing we are prone to underestimate its value and minimize its importance. This is especially true with reference to that inestimable boon "RELIGIOUS LIBERTY." There is an inclination, on the part of many, to enjoy the fruit of the tree without even looking up to see whence it came. And so it is with reference to the great privilege we now enjoy, of worshiping God according to the dictates of our own consciences; many never stop to think whence and how it came.

This RELIGIOUS LIBERTY that we enjoy today is a bright and glorious achievement, resembling in one respect at least, a sharp sword in a shop window. Men look upon it and admire its beauty and usefulness, but do not stop to think of the fires and pains-taking processes through which it had to pass before its present shape was accomplished. Likewise the men who secured our RELIGIOUS LIBERTY did so by passing through fiery trials and severe persecution. If it be asked why all that illustrious company of Baptist preachers should be singled out from all other dissenters as "deserving the pain and ignominy of arrests, bonds, imprisonments and stripes," the reason is not far to seek. Our Baptist fathers believed that the "right to preach the Gospel was inalienable and divine, quite beyond the pale of court's jurisdiction or government control." They were willing, therefore, to suffer all of these things in order to secure RELIGIOUS LIBERTY for themselves and others who would come after them. Our Virginia Baptist forefathers endured much bitter and persistent persecution in their day to obtain that glorious religious freedom which we now enjoy.

The RELIGIOUS LIBERTY that we enjoy today with so much nonchalance is a rich legacy that was bequeathed to all the world by our Baptist forefathers. And although our Baptist people were the first users, chief promoters and largest owners, yet it was not only their last will and testament, but their oft-repeated wish while living, that all others should be benefitted by its use. Now all other denominations are joint heirs with the Baptists in the possession of this princely inheritance. This glorious heritage,

like other inheritances, was passed on to the legatees without cost to them, yet it was acquired through much labor and many hardships. It did not cost us an ounce of energy, or a penny in money, but it was nevertheless dear-bought and should be prized according to its intrinsic worth. Thank God it was not purchased by the *vital* blood of any of the brethren. No Baptist preacher lost his life in that memorable struggle in Virginia for religious freedom, but it did cost them much blood, many tears, and tribulations.

The great events of the world, like the introduction of RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, move with stately tread and it is doubtless right and proper that they should be regarded as the aggregate work of the race; but they can not be fully understood nor rightly appreciated until the motives and opportunities of the individuals who have brought about their glorious consummation have been examined and analyzed. Then it is that our hearts are warmed, our resolves strengthened, our hopes encouraged, and we are persuaded to magnify our own humble part in the ever-changing world drama. There have always been great actors to appear at the auspicious moment, as the protagonists of every great cause. Our Baptist forefathers came to the kingdom for just such a time as that which preceded the American Revolution. Like the Revolutionary heroes, these Soldiers of the Cross consoled themselves, in the midst of all their sufferings with the thought that they were toiling not so much for their own comfort, as for those great national benefits which posterity would enjoy.

We doubt if there can be found anywhere a sincerer body of men, with greater singleness of purpose and simplicity of manners and means, by which they hoped to accomplish their desired ends—than those Baptist preachers who endured persecution and imprisonment in the jails of Colonial Virginia. They labored not spasmodically but uninterruptedly for twenty-seven long years for the absolute separation of Church and State. It is one of the most thrilling stories in all the annals of time, but it is not as well known as it should be.

Virginia Baptists have great reason to be proud of their accomplishments in the past and their numerous contributions to the religious world, but they should be especially grateful for those years which immediately preceded the Revolutionary War, for it was then that they accomplished a work that has covered them

with immortal glory. While the civil authorities of that day were engaged in the herculean task of throwing "a sovereign across the Atlantic," our Baptist fathers did not forget that it was their remote English forebears who "garred kings ken they had a lith in their necks"—(taught kings that there were joints in their cervical vertebrae). And these Baptist preachers in old Virginia taught the people of that day that the vertebrarium of the Establishment not only had joints in it, but that it could be broken. If anyone is inclined to doubt the validity of this claim he is referred to the court records of Colonial Virginia.

Copies of many of these records may be found in this volume, and while they are by no means all, yet they are sufficient to convince any candid inquirer of the justice of the claim.

Baptists especially ought to be familiar with this wonderful story, but unfortunately they are not. However, we are persuaded that this lack of knowledge on their part is due not so much to indifference as to the lamentable fact that these records have hitherto been entombed in dusty archives and wholly inaccessible to the general public. Twenty-seven years ago the author of these pages began to gather here and there all the facts he could find that had any reference to our imprisoned and persecuted preachers. As these facts grew in volume and interest the conclusion was reached that they ought to be put in some permanent form and thereby made available for others who might also be interested. Hence, this volume has been prepared as a labor of love, and in the hope of preserving the information that has been gathered together.

An earlier chronicler would have had access to much more material, for many of the official records of that notable era have long ago been destroyed. Some of them have been consumed by the nimble tongue of the devastating flames. Others have yielded to the ravages of time. And in other cases the pages on which these illustrious deeds were inscribed have become so yellow with age and exposure that they can no longer be deciphered. Tradition has it that the "Order Book" of Amherst County, for that particular period of time, was destroyed during the War Between the States, by Federal soldiers, who used the leaves with their wide margins to write letters back home to their loved ones. In these and many other ways much valuable information has already been

lost and lost forever. What a rich mine of precious historical facts the future historian would possess if he should find the Culpeper County records covering the years between 1765 and 1775. But they have also been destroyed. And the same fate has befallen the records of Stafford, King and Queen, and other counties. The loss of these most valuable records is irreparable and greatly to be deplored, for the Culpeper authorities, especially, were very active in running down and persecuting these inoffensive Baptist preachers. And no man can say that the same misfortune which has already befallen the records of these counties will not eventually overtake the records of other counties in which the exploits of our Baptist preachers have been preserved. Hence it seemed but an act of common prudence that an effort should be made to preserve, in permanent form, what records are still left, and make them accessible to the constantly growing number of people from our own border who are interested as never before in Colonial Virginia—the chief illustration of which is Colonial Williamsburg Restored—to which tourists by increasing thousands are coming every year. And RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, be it remembered, is an achievement of Colonial Virginia.

There are several reasons why it was felt a review of that far away day and of its contribution to the present time might not be inappropriate but very desirable if not necessary.

First, Because there are so many new-comers in our denomination who are not familiar with the facts concerning our persecuted brethren and their contribution to RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

Secondly, Because there are many others, even native-born Virginians, who, like the Psalmist of old, could say, "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days in the times of old"; but they have never seen for themselves the official records of those illustrious deeds.

Thirdly, Because there are those who either doubt the validity of our claim, or who go further and positively deny that any Baptist ministers in Virginia were ever imprisoned, or suffered persecution, for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Here, for example, are several definite cases to prove the latter statement:

Rev. L. A. Alderson, of Atchison, Kansas, in a letter published in the *Religious Herald*, January 12, 1871, reported the case of a distinguished politician who did not believe that Baptists were

persecuted in Virginia, for said he, "I know their ministers were not imprisoned in Culpeper, *for I was raised in that county.*"

Rev. Geo. W. Beale, D. D., in an article published in the *Religious Herald* of June 8, 1899, under the heading, "Baptist Beginnings in Virginia," has this to say :

"The writers of our history have not always been candid and just towards our Baptist fathers. A work widely used in our public schools today has this comment on the era of their oppression. 'There was never any active religious persecution in Virginia.' Another eminent Virginia writer says: 'There was no terror in the law to any who chose to worship God in their own way and place, except a trivial fine for being absent from church.' Again, he says: 'In the history of the vestries of the Episcopal Establishment may be fairly traced that religious liberty which afterwards developed itself in Virginia'."

And Rev. R. H. Pitt, D. D., in an editorial in the *Religious Herald*, dated December 13, 1923, cites another case as follows :

"A Baptist pastor, residing in another State, writes us that a minister of another denomination in his town, who was once a Baptist preacher and lived in Richmond, makes the following statement: 'The Baptist preachers imprisoned in Virginia were so treated for a few hours, and at that only a few of them as ministers. The Baptists have been ever since making capital of their alleged persecutions'."

With these specific cases before us, surely we must believe that another generation has arisen which knows not Joseph.

In conclusion. If this volume shall convey to any uninformed Baptist, or other reader, accurate and trustworthy information as to just what did happen in those far off days, I shall be amply repaid for all my labor in preparing it.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the following brethren for reading the manuscript and offering valuable suggestions: Rev. R. H. Pitt, D. D., editor of the *Religious Herald* for forty-nine years; Rev. W. C. James, D. D., my former pastor now residing in Richmond; Rev. Carter Helm Jones, D. D., my present pastor and well known in the North as well as in the South; Professor Garnett Ryland, of the University of Richmond; Professor R. E.

E. Harkness, of Crozer Theological Seminary, Chester, Pa., and Mr. Frank T. Crump, of Richmond, Virginia, who is Executive Secretary of the Baptist Board of Missions and Education and also Treasurer of the General Association of Virginia. In addition I am indebted to Professor Garnett Ryland for his helpfulness and encouragement during all the years of its preparation, and to Dr. W. C. James and Dr. H. T. Stevens, of Newport News, for their assistance in securing a large number of subscribers to the book.

LEWIS PEYTON LITTLE.

Williamsburg, Virginia.

June 7, 1938.

NOTICE

The reader will please bear in mind that the misspelled words, grammatical errors and quaint phrases found in the *quotations* of this book are not due to carelessness or inattention, but to an earnest desire on the part of the author to preserve them intact as originally written.

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INTRODUCTION



At great pains and unwearied care Mr. Little has through the years searched such records as were available and from them has gathered material for a story which greatly needed to be told, and which he has told in this volume with admirable clarity and piquancy.

Virginia Baptists have grown steadily and rapidly in numbers and influence since that heroic period with which this book deals. There is reason to think that they, or at any rate most of them, know little of the labors, sacrifices, and sufferings of their brethren in that far-off day. To a large number of present day Baptists in this state, the very names of the men who labored and endured are strange. Scattered through Semple's *History*, Taylor's *Lives* and other Baptist books are brief and fragmentary references to persecutions and imprisonments suffered by those early Baptist preachers. Mr. Little has now brought together from every available source the full history, verifying it in many cases by his own examination of official records, and thus the whole brotherhood not only in Virginia, but throughout the land, are under obligations to him. No other publication known to us has rendered a similar service.

This book ought to be in every Virginia Baptist home, or for that matter in every Baptist home in the land. Indeed there is no good reason why Christian people of other communions should not find the story deeply interesting and valuable, for while Mr. Little has told the plain truth, his temper and spirit are beyond all adverse criticism.

No informed and enlightened Baptist would cherish in his heart, or encourage others to cherish, any resentment or bitterness or unbrotherliness because of the hard treatment which our fathers suffered. So far as we can gather the men themselves, who were reviled, reviled not again but went their way preaching the everlasting gospel to their tormentors and persecutors, as well as to all others whom they could reach.

Our Baptist people may well thank God upon every remembrance of these simple, sturdy, fearless, faithful men who lived

well, bore their witness undaunted by danger, and who died in the blessed hope. Their names ought to be household words in the families of our people. Virginia Baptists have a right to indulge laudable and humble pride in that momentous period of their history.

One word more ought to be added. The principle of soul liberty for which they labored and endured is of the highest value and significance. It needs to be safeguarded in every age and in every land. It lies at the very foundation of human freedom. No tyranny is so hateful as that which seeks to fetter the human soul. We are blind if we suppose that the struggle for full recognition and maintenance of this principle is ended, that the victory is assured. Governments still covet the strange spiritual power of religious faith and zeal as manifested in churches and other religious organizations and shrewd politicians diligently seek alliances of this kind. Organized religion, not content with available spiritual resources, too frequently desires and claims the aid of the civil arm. Hence the need of vigilant, loyal, advocacy and defense of this basic principle of human freedom is constantly at hand, and there must be no relaxation in the efforts of those who cherish this elemental religious and political doctrine to make it known in every possible way.

It is doubtful whether these strong, thoughtful, stalwart men, who went to prison for their assertion of this right of the soul to worship God without interference by the civil arm, ever troubled themselves to formulate a philosophy of their position and convictions. They instinctively claimed this freedom. They knew in the depths of their souls that any interference with this inalienable right ought to be steadfastly resisted.

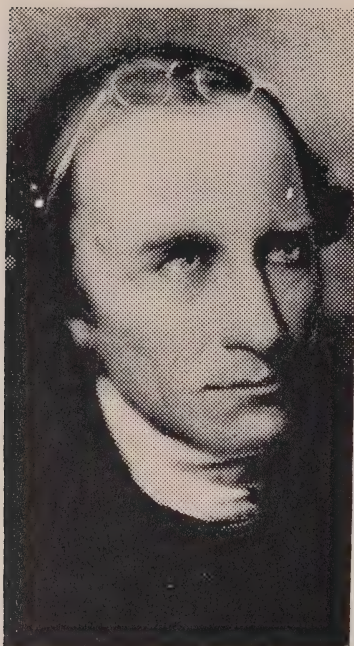
There is, however, between the very nature of religion and the nature of the State a profound distinction which forbids the interference of either in the realm of the other and of course forbids any attempt on the part of either to exercise authority over the other. The pith, the marrow, the very essence of religion is the principle of voluntariness. Strictly speaking there can be no compulsion in religion. Outward compliance with religious form and ceremony may be forced but no prisons, or penalties of any kind, can compel the soul to render a homage and obedience

which it is not ready and willing to render. The principle of choice is inherent and ineradicable in religion.

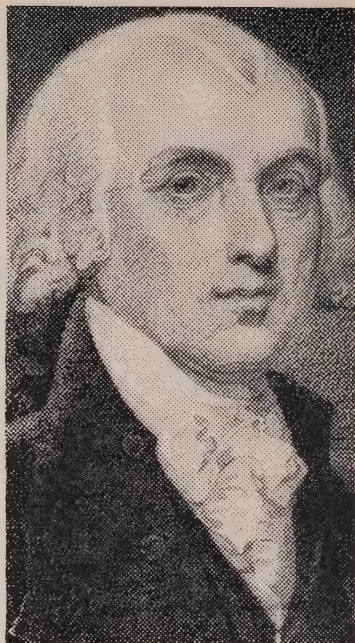
Government rests for its ultimate authority on physical force. When this authority is expressed in law, physical pains and penalties are involved to compel the law's observance. Whenever, therefore, organized religion intervenes in governmental affairs it assumes a part of the responsibility for inflicting physical penalties and whenever government undertakes to administer in religion it must apply physical force in a realm where it has no place and no function.

I must be allowed to put on record my own deep sense of gratitude to Mr. Little for his labor, his skill, his care, his devotion as they have been shown in this volume. It is a high privilege to follow these heroic men through their varied and poignant experiences in that troubled time, a privilege all the richer since their struggle finally issued in the disappearance of every vestige of the hateful tyranny against which they bore their witness.

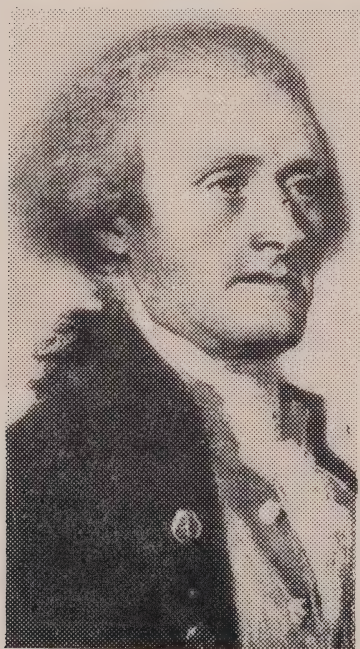
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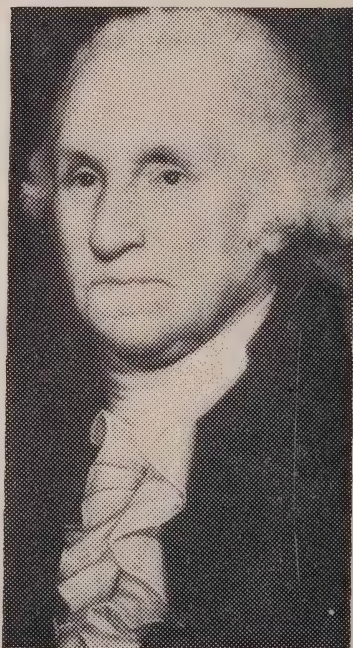
PATRICK HENRY



JAMES MADISON



THOMAS JEFFERSON



Courtesy Richmond Times-Dispatch
GEORGE WASHINGTON

FAITHFUL ALLIES OF THE BAPTISTS DURING THEIR STRUGGLE FOR
RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

CHAPTER I

1607

LAWS LEADING UP TO THE PERSECUTION PERIOD

Virginia was settled by English adventurers, who were loyalists and devoted to their King. They named the river, up which they sailed upon reaching this country, and the town they established upon its banks, after His Majesty, James I. In religion they were churchmen joined and wedded to the Church of England. In fact the very charter under which the Virginia Colony operated, which was dated April 10, 1606, contained very definite and drastic instructions as to how religion was to be introduced and propagated in the New World. That part of the law which refers to the religion of the Colony is as follows :

“We do specially ordaine, charge, and require, the said presidents, and Counsels, and the ministers of the said several colonies respectively, within their several limits and precincts, that they, with all diligence, care, and respect doe provide, that the true word, and service of God and Christian faith be preached, planted and used, not only within every of the said several colonies, and plantations, but alsoe as much as they may amongst the salvage people which doe or shall adjoine unto them, or border upon them, according to the doctrine, rights, and religion now professed and established within the realme of England, and that they shall not suffer any person, or persons to withdrawe any of the subjects or people inhabiting, or which shall inhabit within any of the said several colonies and plantations from the same, or from their due allegiance, unto us, our heirs and successors, as their immediate sovereigne under God; and if they shall find within any of the said colonies and plantations, any person or persons soe seeking to withdrawe any of the subjects or us, our heires or successors, and any of the people of those lands or territories, within the precincts aforesaid, they shall with all diligence, him or them soe offending cause to be apprehended, arrested, and imprisoned, until he shall fully and thoroughly reforme himself, or otherwise, when the cause so requireth, that he shall, with all convenient speed be sent into our realme of England, here to receive

condone punishment for his or their said offence or offences." (*The Statutes at Large, Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia*, by William Waller Hening (1823), Vol. I, pp. 68, 69.)

"An 'old rotten tent' was the first church in the American wilderness. The next step was to stretch an awning between the trunks of trees; to nail a bar between two of these to serve as a reading-desk—and here 'the religious and courageous divine,' Mr. Hunt, read the service morning and evening, preached twice every Sunday, and celebrated the Holy Communion at intervals of three months. After awhile the settlers busied themselves in constructing a regular church. It was not an imposing structure, since the chronicle describes it as a log building 'covered with rafts, sedge, and dirt,' but soon they did better. When Lord Delaware came, in 1610, he found at Jamestown a church sixty feet long and twenty-four broad, the first permanent religious edifice erected by Englishmen in North America." (John Esten Cooke's *Virginia*, p. 20.)

Five years after these colonists had landed at Jamestown "The Code of Sir Thomas Dale" was published for the government of the colony, and it was designed to direct in detail the administration of the Ecclesiastical law. In addition to the quaint spelling and phraseology of this legal enactment the careful reader will note the substitution of "u" for "v," and *vice versa*. In regard to religion, this Code provides as follows:

"There is not one man nor woman in this Colonie, now present, nor hereafter to arriue, but shall giue vp an accovnt of his and their faith, and religion, and repaire vnto the Minister, that by his conference with them, hee may vnderstand, and gather, whether heretofore they have beene sufficiently instructed, and catechised in the principles and grounds of Religion, whose weaknesse and ignorance herein, the Minister finding, and advising them in loue and charitie, to repaire often vnto him, to receiue therein a greater measure of knowledge, if they shal refuse to repaire vnto him, and he the Minister, giue notice thereof to the Gouernour, or the chief officer of that towne or fort, wherein he or she, the parties so offending shall remaine, the Gouernour shall cause the offender for the first time of refusal, to be whipt,

for the second time to be whipt twice, and to acknowledge his fault vpon the Saboth day, in the assembly of the congregation, and for the third time, to be whipt every day, vntil he hath made the same acknowledgement, and asked forgiueness for the same, and shall repaire vnto the Minister, to be further instructed as aforesaid: and vpon the Saboth when the Minister shall catechise, and of him demand any question concerning his faith and knowledge, he shall not refuse to make answere vpon the same perill." (From *Tracts and other Papers, Relating Principally to the Origin, Settlement, and Progress of the Colonies in North America from the discovery of the Country to the year 1776*, Collected by Peter Force, 1844 (Washington), printed by Wm. G. Force, Vol. III, pp. 17, 18.)

"Our ancestors, being chiefly emigrants from England, brought with them all that religious intolerance which had so long prevailed in the mother country.—Thus we see, that the first care of our early legislatures was to provide for the church of England, as established by the act of parliament. By the first act of 1623, it is provided that, in every plantation, or settlement, there shall be a house or room set apart for the worship of God. But, it soon appears that this worship was only to be according to the canons of the church of England, to which a strict uniformity was enjoined. A person absenting himself from divine service, on a Sunday, without a reasonable excuse, forfeited a pound of tobacco; and he that absented himself a month, forfeited 50 lbs. Any minister who was absent from his church above two months in a year, forfeited half his salary; and he who absented himself four months, forfeited the whole. Whoever disparaged a minister, whereby the minds of his parishoners might be alienated, was compelled to pay 500 lbs. of tobacco, and ask the minister's pardon publicly in the congregation. No man was permitted to dispose of any of his tobacco, till the minister was satisfied, under the penalty of forfeiting double his part of the minister's salary."

"The first allowance made to the minister was ten lbs. of tobacco and a bushel of corn for each tithable; and every labouring person, of what quality or condition soever, was bound to contribute. In the year 1631, the assembly granted to the ministers, besides the former allowance of ten pounds of tobacco and a

bushel of corn, the 20th calf, the 20th kid, and the 20th pig. This was the first introduction of tithes, properly so called, in Virginia. But it did not continue long; for, in 1633, the law was repealed." (Semple's *History* (1810), pp. 27, 28.)

1643

As early as 1643, a law was enacted "to preserve purity of doctrine, and unity of the church," forbidding any to teach, or preach publicly or privately who was not a minister of the Church of England, and did not conform to its mode of worship. It was further provided, that the Governor and council should take care that all *non-conformists*, departed "the colony with all convenience."

1649

In 1649 some Puritans who had escaped the vigilance of both the Governor and council since their edict in 1643, were obliged to leave the Colony. "Its members, which numbered one hundred and eighteen, went mostly to Maryland." (Newman's *America* (1881), p. 180.)

At this time Virginia had fifteen thousand white inhabitants, three hundred negroes, and twenty churches.

1652

"On March 12, 1652, the English fleet under Capt. Edward Curtis received the submission of the Virginia colony to Parliament after some delay on the part of Sir William Berkeley. The terms provided for non-taxation, save by provincial assembly: for the use of the Book of Common Prayer one year, and for one year in which any one could remove who did not wish to submit to the Commonwealth." (Newman's *America* (1881), p. 182.)

1655

A levy of fifteen pounds of tobacco per poll was laid, in the year 1655, upon all tithables; the surplus of which, after paying the minister's salary, was to be laid out in purchasing a glebe and stock for the minister. This law was re-enacted in the revival of 1657.

"During the existence of the commonwealth of England, the church government of Virginia experienced an important change. Instead of enjoining obedience to the doctrine and discipline of the church of England, no injunction in favor of any particular sect appears. Every thing relating to the affairs of the church, was left at the entire disposal of the vestry, who being elected by the people, it may, in effect, be said that the people regulated their own church government." (*Semple's History* (1810), p. 29.)

1659

But only two years afterwards (at the March session 1659-60), when the Quakers first made their appearance in Virginia, the utmost degree of persecution was exercised towards them. The masters of vessels were subject to a heavy penalty if they brought one into the colony, they were imprisoned, if they came, without bail, and required to depart the colony as speedily as possible.

After the restoration of Charles II to the throne of England, which happened on the 29th of May, 1660, a temporary provision was again made for the Established Church, in Virginia.

1661

"In the year 1661, the supremacy of the church of England, was again fully established. The first nine acts of the session held in March, 1661-2, are devoted to that subject. A church was to be built in each parish; and vestries appointed. Glebes were directed to be procured for the ministers, and convenient houses built thereon; in addition to which, their salaries were fixed at 80 pounds per annum, at least, besides their perquisites. No minister was permitted to preach unless he had received ordination from some bishop in England. If any person, without such ordination, attempted to preach publicly or privately, the governor and council might suspend and silence him; and, if he persisted, they were empowered to send him out of the country. In those parishes, where there was not a minister to officiate every Sunday, a *reader* was to be appointed, whose duty it was to read divine service every intervening Sunday. The liturgy, according to the canons of the church of England, was to be read every Sunday by the minister or reader; and the administration of the sacra-

ments was to be duly observed. No other catechism than that, inserted in the book of common prayer, could be taught by the minister; nor could a reader attempt to expound that, or the scriptures. Ministers were compelled to preach every Sunday; one Sunday in a month, at the Chapel, if any, and the others at the parish church; and twice a year he was compelled to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Every person was compelled to attend church every Sunday, under the penalty of 50 lbs. of tobacco. But Quakers and non-conformists were liable to the penalties of the statute of 23d Elizabeth, which was 20 pounds sterling for every month's absence, and, moreover, for twelve months' absence, to give security for their good behaviour. —Quakers were further liable to a fine of 200 lbs. of tobacco, for each one found at one of their meetings; and in case of the insolvency of any one of them, those who were able were to pay for the insolvents." (Semple's *History* (1810), pp. 30, 31.)

1662

In 1662 the government passed the following statute:

"Whereas many schismaticall persons out of their avernesse to the orthodox established religion, or out of the new fangled conceits of their owne hereticall inventions, refuse to have their children baptised, *Be it therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid*, that all persons that, in contempt of the divine sacrament of baptism, shall refuse when they may carry their child to a lawfull minister in that county to have them baptised, shall be amerced two thousand pounds of tobacco; halfe to informer and halfe to the publike." (Hening's *Statutes at Large* (1823), Vol. II, pp. 165, 166.)

In the practical application of this law one father found it even more expensive as the following specific case will prove:

"The Church in Lower Norfolk County.

April 16, 1675

Present Mr. Jno porter Serg Capt Wm. Robinson Major francis Sayer Mr. Geo fouler Mr Mala Thurston, Justices

Whereas Jno Biggs was summoned to this Court for nott haveing his children Baptised wch could nott positively be proved agt him butt majr francis Sayer being a member of

this Court a neighbor & Relative of the said biggs did affirme that he never heard that the sd Biggs had Christened his youngest child though ther hath been a minister in that prsh for the most part of the time Since it was borne. Where upon it was by the Court Referred to the said biggs his oath whether hee had Soe done or nott wch hee Refused to Swear the Court doth therefore Conceave him guilty and have ordr that the sd biggs doe beetwene this and the 12th of May next Repayre to Some Lawfull minister with his Children that are nott Baptised, and there to have them Baptised and produce certif thereof to the next Court or upon default thereof the said Biggs to be fined according to Law in that cases proved."

On June 16, 1675, the fine is imposed and the cost added which amounted to 3,225 pounds of tobacco:

"John Edwards Informing agt Jno Biggs upon the act for nott Baptising of his children wch apearig to the Court It is ordred that the sd bigg pay one thousand pounds of tob and Cask to the said Jno Edwards and one thousand pounds of tob and caske to the pish according to act, and pay one thousand and two hundred twenty & five pounds of tob and Cask in full of his cost."

In 1670 Virginia had a total population of forty thousand: thirty-two thousand white people besides two thousand slaves, and six thousand white servants—these latter being a class disfranchised by law.

1673

The whole colony of Virginia was unjustly granted by Charles II to the Earl of Arlington and Lord Culpeper, in 1673, for a term of thirty-one years, which caused great trouble among the citizens. But that same year the authorities are found zealously guarding the interests of the church, for it was ordered that a house of worship should be erected on every plantation, and the service must be that of the Church of England. Everyone was required to attend church, or be heavily fined, and no one could sell his tobacco till his tax for the support of the minister was paid.

1676

In 1676 "The Governor, Councill and Burgesses" enacted a law which provided for representatives of each county "to be chosen by the majoritie of votes of householders, ffree-holders and ffreemen of each parish" to assist "in the laying the county assessments, and of making wholesome by lawes for the good of their counties." (Hening's *Statutes at Large* (1823), p. 357.)

This was equivalent to declaring it to be the "right of Virginians as well as all other Englishmen, not to be taxed but by their own consent, expressed by their representatives," and yet the same people were exacting ten pounds of tobacco from every tithable; and every laboring person, of whatever condition or quality, was compelled to contribute to the salary of the Established minister whether he desired or not. Everyone was compelled to go to the church established by law—the one preferred and recommended by the authorities.

The parson's salary was paid in tobacco, and while there may be some uncertainty about a tobacco crop, yet the Virginia preacher had a decided advantage over his New England brother, if the latter were compelled to rely entirely upon this queer provision found in the following record of the New England seaport towns for the year 1662:

"The court proposeth it as a thing they judge would be very commendable and beneficial to the towns where God's providence shall cast any whales, if they should agree to sett apart some p'te of every such fish or oyle for the encouragement of an able and godly minister amongst them." (Newman's *America* (1881), p. 191.)

The Virginia colonists were not willing for their ministers to be dependent upon any such doubtful support as that of "God's providence" casting up any whales on their shores, so they took definite steps to provide a more dependable means of support.

The authorities levied a tax of so many pounds of tobacco upon the inhabitants, but it was not always paid with a good grace. It is very evident, from the numerous laws that were passed by the Virginia legislature, that at a very early date some of the inhabitants were not in sympathy with the Established

Church. But the civil powers sought to smother these smouldering embers that were burning in men's bosoms, by legal enactments and religious restrictions. However, it is not at all strange that this mode of procedure was adopted by these early settlers when we consider their origin and the training they had received at home, as Englishmen. The mother country had been engaged in the business of persecuting dissenters, by putting them in prison, and in various ways harassing them for a number of years. "In England during the reign of Charles II every thing that malicious ingenuity could invent was tried to cure the Baptists of their heresy, and dragoon them into the church. The prayer-book or the prison was their watch-word; the parish worship or the penal statutes, was the order of the day."

Daniel Defoe, the author of the yet widely read Robinson Crusoe, has left a brief statement about the reign of Charles II (1660-1685), that is very illuminating. It is to be found in his preface to the seventeenth edition of Thomas Delaune's work. After giving an account of Delaune's prolonged imprisonment and death, Defoe adds:

"I am sorry to say, he is one of near 8000 Protestant dissenters, who perished in prison in the days of that merciful prince, King Charles II." (Cook's *The Story of the Baptists*, p. 129.)

1689

The famous Toleration Act of William and Mary, passed in England in 1689, was a signal relief from heavy burdens, and "the first recognition of the right of public worship beyond the pale of the State church"; but judged by the present standard of soul-liberty, it was a very grudging and imperfect boon. Still, as "grudging and imperfect" as it was, it was nevertheless so far superior to anything that dissenters had experienced before, that it was hailed with hallelujahs and much rejoicing, not only in England, but in Virginia as well. And Daniel Defoe, who was a staunch Baptist, even called upon his brethren "annually to commemorate, by a standing law among themselves, that great day of their deliverance, when it pleased God to tread down persecution, oppression, church-tyranny and State-tyranny, under the feet of the law, and to establish the liberty of their consciences, which

they had so long prayed for, in a public and legal toleration." (*Religious Herald*, March 2, 1871.)

Now when did the Toleration Act begin to operate in the Virginia colony? Some historians have thought that it began when Francis Mackemie obtained a license for a Presbyterian church in Accomac County, but the official records support the statement that there was an instance earlier by seven years than the Mackemie case. In fact it was only three years after the Toleration Act was passed in England, that another Presbyterian minister applied for and obtained, in the Norfolk County court, a license to preach at several stations on Elizabeth River. As frequent reference will be made in these pages to "taking the oath," and subscribing to the "Articles of Religion," this is a good place to give a copy of these official documents.

1692

According to Dr. William B. Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*, Vol. III, page 6, the records of Norfolk County contain this account of one of the earliest Presbyterian preachers in this country, Josias Mackie. With reference to this early preacher Dr. Sprague's book gives the following statement and subjoins copies of the oath, etc.:

"On the 22nd of June, 1692, the Rev. Josias Mackie appeared before two magistrates,—Thomas Butt and James Wilson,—and by formal oath, renounced all connection with the Roman Catholic Church; and declared his approbation, according to law, for the "Articles of Religion," with certain exceptions, as allowed in the case of Dissenters. The oaths, as preserved upon the County Records, are as follows:

"I, Josias Mackie, do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare that I do believe that, in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, there is not any transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, at, or after, the consecration thereof, by any person whatsoever; and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary, or any other saint, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, as they are now used in the Church of Rome, are superstitious and idolatrous; and I do solemnly, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare that I do

make this Declaration, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words read to me, as they are commonly understood by English Protestants, without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever, and without any dispensation granted me, for this purpose, by the Pope, or any authority or person whatsoever, or without thinking that I am, or can be, acquitted before God or man, or absolved of this declaration, or any part thereof, although the Pope or any person, or persons, or power whatsoever, should dispense with or annul the same, or declare that it was null and void from the beginning.

“Josias Mackie.

“I do further, as a minister of the Gospel, declare my approbation of, and do subscribe unto, the Articles of Religion mentioned in the statute made in the thirteenth year of the reign of the late Queen Elizabeth; except the thirty-fourth, about the traditions of the church; the thirty-fifth, concerning homilies; the thirty-sixth, of consecration of bishops and ministers; and the words of the twentieth article, viz: the church hath power to *decree* rights and ceremonies, and *impose*. I say, I do here-by declare my approbation of, and subscribe, the aforesaid Articles of Religion, excepting above, expressed by act of Parliament.

Josias Mackie.”

On the same day, Mackie took the oath of fidelity, and received permission to preach at certain places. This oath is as follows:

“I do sincerely promise and swear that I will be faithful, bear true allegiance to their Majesties, King William and Queen Mary—so help me God.

“I do swear that I do from my heart, abhor, detest, and abjure, as impious and heretical, that damnable doctrine and position, that princes, excommunicated or deprived by, on any authority of the See of Rome, may be deposed, or murdered by their subjects, or any whatsoever; and I do declare that no foreign princes, person, prelate, state, or potentate, hath or ought to have any power, jurisdiction, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm—so help me God.”

1699

In Dr. Sprague's book, page 2, this account of another preacher, Francis Mackemie, may be found:

"In October, 1699, Mr. Mackemie obtained a formal license to preach, agreeable to the requirements of the Toleration Act,—having previously received a certificate of his qualifications at Barbadoes. There is a tradition that, through the influence of some of the clergy of the Established Church, he was arrested and carried to Williamsburg, to answer for the alleged irregularity of preaching without a license; and that he made so favourable an impression on the Governor, that he immediately became his friend, and not only licensed his dwelling-house as a place of worship, but also gave him a general license to preach any where within the limits of the Colony."

These two instances of a license being granted to Presbyterian preachers are the earliest that this author has been able to find in the history of the colony. It will be noted that in the case of Josias Mackie the license was granted by the *county* court; but in that of Francis Mackemie the *general* court, or the Governor, is the grantor. Later on it will be seen that the county courts disclaimed any authority to issue such licenses and made it obligatory upon those who desired concessions to make the long journey to Williamsburg the Capital, before they could be obtained.

In addition to the long journey, they must first obtain the signatures of twenty signers requesting it, and two magistrates, and then be examined by a clergyman of the Established Church before the license would be granted.

So stringent were the laws against dissenters and the supremacy of the Establishment so evident that Baptists were kept out of the Virginia colony for more than a hundred years after it was settled. Baptist churches were being organized north and south of Virginia during the seventeenth century; one at Providence, Rhode Island, in 1639, and one in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1682; but we have no account of such an organization within the bounds of the "Old Dominion" until the beginning of the eighteenth century. "The earliest account," says the Baptist Encyclopedia (Cathcart), page 1186, "of any Baptist in Virginia is the

statement of Rev. Morgan Edwards, that in 1695, there were some Baptists in North Carolina who had gone from Virginia to escape the intolerance of the laws of the latter colony."

An English Quaker recorded in his journal (*Journal of Thomas Story*), that while on a visit to Virginia in the year 1699, "We had a meeting in York City at the home of one Thomas Bonger, a preacher among the General Baptists."

These fragmentary references to Baptists in Virginia in that early day are all that we could find. Persecution made Baptists shun publicity, and if there were those in Virginia who entertained such views, they must have regarded it but prudent to keep their views to themselves. "Still," says Dr. David Weston, "though overborne and suppressed for a hundred years, Baptist principles were secure in their own immortality, and were, even in Virginia, silently, unobtrusively, but effectively laying a foundation for subsequent glorious triumphs." (Quoted in *The Story of the Baptists in all Ages and Countries*, by Rev. Richard B. Cook, D.D. (1886), on page 227, from *Baptists and the National Centenary*.)

While there may have been some Baptists throughout the colony prior to the eighteenth century they were evidently a "feeble folk" and few, scattered here and there with no permanent abiding place, and with no organization whatsoever. But early in the eighteenth century the situation began to change, though for full fifty years the progress was slow, and all their combined efforts attracted but little attention. So inconspicuous were the few organizations that sprang up here and there during that time that they hardly attracted the attention of the historians sufficiently to cause them to record their names, much less to give any facts about them.

CHAPTER II

1714

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN VIRGINIA—AND OTHERS

BURLEIGH

Isle of Wight County

The oldest and most authoritative reference that we have of a Baptist church in Virginia, is to be found in a letter from Rev. Isaac Backus, dated May 31st, 1803, and published in Semple's *History* (1810), page 344, which is as follows:

“A letter is now before me, written from Virginia, to elder Eyres of Newport, January 28th, 1742, by John Hamerstley; where it appears, that in consequence of letters from Virginia, Robert Nordin and Thomas White were ordained in London, in May, 1714; and soon sailed for Virginia. But White died by the way, and Nordin arrived in Virginia and gathered a Baptist church in Prince George county; and held meetings there and in other places, until he died, December 1st, 1725, in a good old age. And on April 30th, 1727, the church ordained Richard Jones their elder, who continued to be their minister in 1742, the church had about forty members.”

Perhaps the “other places” in which Robert Nordin held meetings included the counties of Isle of Wight and Surry, as brief references are found to a Baptist church in each of these counties in that early day.

From *A History of the Baptist Church in the United States*, by Newman, page 230, this account is taken:

“From the early years of the eighteenth century there were a number of scattered Baptists in Virginia, especially in Isle of Wight County. Some of these sent an earnest petition to the General Baptists of London for ministerial help. In response two ministers, Robert Nordin and Thomas White, were sent out in 1714. The latter died before reaching Vir-

ginia; the former organized a church at Burleigh. It is possible that this and other General Baptists churches had already been gathered before the arrival of Nordin."

1724

Robert Nordin and this church at Burleigh evidently exerted some influence over the inhabitants of Isle of Wight, for we are informed by Bishop Mead's *Old Churches and Families in Virginia* that the parson of that county complained about the Baptists in 1724. On pages 301 and 302 of the above named work this statement may be found:

"In the year 1724 * * * * the Rev. Alexander Forbes was minister of the upper parish (Isle of Wight) and writes to the Bishop of London. He complains much of the Quakers, who annoyed him not a little; somewhat of the Annabaptists who were then finding their way in Virginia. * * * "

1729

"In the year 1729," says Benedict's *History of the Baptists*, Vol. II, page 24, "as appears by a letter sent by Rev. Paul Palmer, from North Carolina, to Rev. John Comer, of Newport, Rhode Island," there is another reference to this Burleigh church and her pastor, which is as follows:

"There is a comely little church in the Isle of Wight county, of about thirty or forty members, the elder of which is one Richard Jones, a very sensible old gentleman, whom I have great love for. We see each other at every Yearly Meeting, and sometimes more often. There is another church in Surry county, where my brother Jones lives, I suppose of about thirty more."

Newman's *A History of the Baptist Church in the United States*, page 230, states that:

"Before 1729 there was a church in Surry County, in close affiliation, it would seem, with that at Burleigh."

From these brief notices it would appear that there was a Baptist church in each of these three counties south of the James River—Prince George, Surry and Isle of Wight—early in the

eighteenth century. How long the churches in Prince George and Surry continued in existence we do not know, but Benedict's *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America* (1813), Vol. II, page 24, says:

"The one in the Isle of Wight, we have good reason to believe continued on the ground where it was established between forty and fifty years, when, according to Morgan Edward's account, it was broken up, partly by sickness, and partly by the removal of families from hence to North Carolina, where they gained many proselytes, and in ten years became sixteen churches."

If we accept the "fifty years" it would bring this church up to the year 1764, or, within the period of time when the Baptists were being bitterly persecuted. But out of that dark cloud of persecution, as Dr. Howell so beautifully says:

"Church after church noiselessly arose like the shining out of the stars of evening, and sparkled like gems in the American firmament, which they were destined ere long to fill with radiance and beauty." (Quoted in Cook's *The Story of Baptists*, p. 277.)

We have no positive information about this church, Burleigh, after 1756, but their pastor, Richard Jones, lived until the year 1762, the year his will was probated in Isle of Wight County.

1742

In passing it may not be out of place to mention the case of a Presbyterian minister who was arrested for preaching without a license. The account is found in Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit* (1859), page 93:

"It was late in the year of 1742, when this preacher, Rev. William Robinson, was sent into the Valley of Virginia and North Carolina on a missionary tour. 'Soon after entering Virginia,' says Mr. Sprague, 'he was seized, near Winchester, by the Sheriff of Orange County and required to go to Williamsburg, to answer to the Governor for preaching without a license. Before he had proceeded far, however, the Sheriff finding that he was evidently a sensible and well-disposed man, released him to pursue his mission unmolested'."

About this time there was a growing dissatisfaction with the character of the preaching in parish churches and many dissenters were beginning to absent themselves from the Established Church. In some instances those who were more religiously inclined would meet together and hear a sermon read by one of their own number. This was true as far as the Baptists were concerned in Culpeper, Stafford, and Amelia counties, and perhaps in many other counties of which we have no record.

Other groups besides those of the Baptist persuasion were following the same general course. At first these dissenters met in private homes, then later in some instances houses were built and used for this purpose; but, observe, these buildings were not called churches, not even meeting-houses, but *reading houses*. At length their absence from the parish churches was noted, grand jury presentments followed and fines were meted out with a lavish hand. An interesting story of one of these "reading" groups comes to us from Hanover County, and has to do with a group which was not certain as to their belief and did not even know by what name to call themselves. It is found in Rev. William Henry Foote, D.D., *Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical* (1850), pages 121-125. In abbreviated form his account is as follows, and is the testimony of two men—Mr. Hunt and Mr. Morris:

Mr. Morris's account commences with the statement that Mr. Whitfield preached in Williamsburg in the year 1740, "But we being sixty miles distant from Williamsburg, he left the colony before we had an opportunity of hearing him. But, in the year 1743, a young gentleman from Scotland had got a book of his sermons preached in Glasgow, taken from his mouth, in short hand, which after I had read with great benefit, I invited my neighbors to come and hear it. * * * A considerable number met to hear these sermons every Sabbath, and frequently on week days. * * *

"My dwelling house was at length too small to contain the people, whereupon we determined to build a meeting house merely for *reading*. And having never been used to social prayer, none of us durst attempt it."

“Mr. Hunt’s narrative says—‘And now their numbers became too large for any private house to contain them, another step is taken,—they build first one, and then another of what they called *reading houses*. Hence the number of attendants and the force of divine influence much increased.’

* * * * *

“The phrase *Morris’s Reading House* has come down to us, by tradition, as connected inseparably with the rise of Presbyterians in Hanover; it was applied first to the house on Mr. Morris’s land, and then to another and another as they were erected to accomodate the people. The assemblies held regularly in these houses, together with the desertion of the parish churches rendered these gentlemen peculiarly obnoxious to the laws of the colony; and as the new opinions gained adherents in Hanover, it was urged that indulgence but encouraged the evil, and the strong arm of the law was invoked. ‘Our absenting ourselves from the church’—says Mr. Morris,—‘contrary as was alleged to the laws of the land, was taken notice of, and we were called upon by the court to assign our reasons for it, and to declare what denomination we were of.’ Mr. Hunt says—‘They were no longer considered as individual delinquents whose obstinacy might be sufficiently punished by the civil magistrate; but as a malignant cabal, that required the interposition of the executive. They were accordingly cited to appear before the Governor and Council. The exaction of frequent fines for non attendance at church they bore, with patience and fortitude, for the sake of a good conscience; but to be charged with a crime, of the nature and extent and penalty of which they had but indistinct conceptions, spread a gloom over their minds, and filled them with anxious forebodings more easily conceived than described. They were certainly and obviously a religious society, separate and distinct from the only one, the established church, which either the government or the people knew in the country, and yet they were without a name.’

* * * * *

“At last they were required to appear at Williamsburg, and to declare their creed and name before the Governor and Council, who assumed the entire control of matters pertaining to dissenters.

“Mr. Morris says—in reference to the visit—‘as we know but little of any denomination of dissenters, except Quakers, we were at a loss what name to assume. At length recollecting that Luther was a noted Reformer, and that his book had been of special service to us, we declared ourselves Lutherans.’ It does not appear that this plea exempted them from fines, for absence from church, while it shielded them from persecution as disturbers of the public peace. Mr. Hunt, in his narrative, gives an interesting account of a visit made, by his father and some other gentlemen, to Williamsburg, to have an interview with the Governor and Council. He tells us that one of the company, travelling alone, was overtaken and detained, by a violent storm, at the house of a poor man on the road. He interested himself in looking over an old volume, which he found upon a shelf covered with dust. Upon perusing it he was amazed to find his own sentiments, as far as he had formed any on religious things, drawn out in appropriate language; and as far as he read, the whole summary met his approbation. Offering to purchase the book, the owner gave it to him. In Williamsburg, he examined the old book again, in company with his friends; they all agreed that it expressed their views on the doctrines of religion. When they appeared before the Governor they presented this old volume as their creed. Governor Gooch, himself of Scotch origin and education, upon looking at the volume, pronounced the men Presbyterians, as the book was the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland; and that they were not only tolerated but acknowledged as a part of the established church of the realm. Mr. Hunt thought, and used to tell the circumstance with great earnestness, that a violent thunder storm shaking the house and wrapping all in sheets of fire, had a softening influence on the minds of the Governor and Council, inclining them to deal gently with their fellow men. When the storm abated, the men were dismissed with a gentle caution from the Governor not to excite any disturbance in his majesty’s colony, nor by any irregularities disturb the good order of society in their parish.”

The same story in condensed form is found in Thos. Cary Johnson’s *Virginia Presbyterianism and Religious Liberty in Colonial Times* (1907), page 30.

1743

MILL CREEK

*Transformed Oct. 20, 1752, into a Particular
Baptist Church*

In following up the history of these early churches, the scene now shifts from the south-eastern portion of the State to the northern part. Semple's *History* (1810), page 288, states that :

"In 1743, Edward Hays and Thomas Yates, members of a Baptist congregation in Maryland, moved with a company, and settled on Opeckon, in Berkley county, Virginia. Their minister, Mr. Henry Loveall, soon followed them. His preaching was attended with success, and in a short time he baptized fifteen persons. They continued their church state until 1751."

Benedict's *History*, Vol. II, pages 26 and 27, gives some additional information with reference to this old church, as follows :

"The church on Opeckon creek appears to have been the oldest of the three, and was gathered and renovated in the following manner. In the year 1743, a number of the members of the General Baptist church at Chestnut Ridge, in Maryland, removed to Virginia, and settled in this place ; the most noted of whom were Edward Hays and Thomas Yates. Soon after their removal, their minister, Henry Loveall, followed them, and baptized about fifteen persons, whom he formed into a church on the Arminian plan. Mr. Loveall, becoming licentious in his life, was turned out of the church, and returned to Maryland ; and the church was broken up, or rather transformed into a church of Particular Baptists, in 1751,* by the advice and assistance of Messrs. James Miller, David Thomas, and John Gano, who was, at that time, very young. Mr. Miller had visited this church in some of his former journies, and had been instrumental of much good among them ; and when they, in their troubles occasioned by Loveall's misconduct, petitioned the Philadelphia Association for some assistance, he and Mr. Thomas

* Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, 1707-1807, p. 93, says : "Oct. 20, 1752."

were appointed by the Association for the purpose. Mr. Gano, though not appointed, chose to accompany them. The account of this transaction is thus given by Mr. Gano: 'We examined them, and found that they were not a regular church. We then examined those who offered themselves for the purpose, and those who gave us satisfaction, we received, and constituted a new church. Out of the whole who offered themselves, there were only three received. Some openly declared, they knew they could not give an account of experiencing a work of grace, and therefore need not offer. Others stood ready to offer, if a church was formed. The three before-mentioned were constituted, and six more were baptized and joined them. After meeting ended, a number of old members went aside and sent for me. They expressed their deplorable state, and asked me if I would meet with them that evening, and try to instruct them. They were afraid the ministers blamed them. They had been misled, but it was not their fault, and they hoped I would pity them. I told them I would with all my heart, and endeavored to remove their suspicion of the ministers. They met, and I spoke to them from these words, "*They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*" I hope I was assisted to speak to them in an impressive manner; and they to hear, at least some of them, so as to live. They afterwards professed, and became zealous members, and remained so, I believe, until their deaths'."

Elder Shubal Stearns, who became a Baptist in 1751, at Tolland, Connecticut, after having been for six years a minister among the New Lights, as the converted Congregational communities were called, felt the Spirit of God urging him to a greater and more extended work.

Incited by his impressions, in the year 1754, he and a few of his members took their leave of New England. They halted first at Opeckon, in Berkeley county, Virginia, where he found a Baptist church under the care of Elder Samuel Heaton, who met him kindly. Elder Heaton seems to have been their pastor after they were "renovated" in 1751, and continued in that capacity until 1754.

It was in this latter year that Shubal Stearns arrived from New England. Here, Elder Stearns met his brother-in-law, Rev. Daniel Marshall, just returned from his mission among the Indians, and who after his arrival had become a Baptist.

In 1754 Elder Samuel Heaton removed to Konolowa, Pennsylvania, and was succeeded by Elder John Garrard, who is supposed to have been a native of Pennsylvania, and who became the most distinguished pastor the Mill-creek, or Opeckon church, had hitherto enjoyed. This church united with the Philadelphia Association, soon after its renovation in 1751.

They became very warm and animated in their religious experiences, and more particularly so, after Mr. Marshall and the zealous Separates came amongst them; and they soon went to such lengths in their New Light career, that some of the less engaged members lodged a complaint against them in the Association to which they belonged. Mr. Miller was again sent for the purpose of adjusting their difficulties. When he came, he was highly delighted with the exercises, joined them cordially, and said, if he had such warm-hearted christians in his church, he would not take gold for them. He charged those who had complained, rather to nourish than complain of such gifts. The work of God revived among them, and considerable additions were made to the church.

The country, in which they had settled, was but thinly inhabited, and was subject to the inroads of the Indians. Some of these savage eruptions took place not long after Mr. Garrard had settled among them; in consequence of which, he and many of the church removed below the Blue Ridge, and resided for some time in Loudon county, on Ketockton creek.

Mill-creek seems to have been revived, or reinstated after the Indian eruption in 1757. Mr. Garrard moved back to Berkeley county, and again took charge of the church. He was the pastor of Mill-creek in 1766, when the Ketockton Association was organized and met in their first meeting at the Ketockton church. Mr. Garrard continued to be their pastor until his death, the date of which is unknown, and was succeeded by Elder David Thomas, about the year 1788. (Quoted in part from both Benedict's and Semple's histories.)

On Sunday, July 6, 1743, Rev. William Robinson preached for the people in Hanover County, and it was "the first sermon from a Presbyterian minister ever heard in Hanover County." He laboured publicly and privately for four days and was then "constrained to take his departure in order to meet other engagements; and besides, it began to be rumored that measures were about to be taken to arrest him as an itinerant." (Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*, Vol. III, p. 94.)

This is the same man who was arrested the year before near Winchester, by the Sheriff of Orange County, who started off with him for the Colonial Capital, Williamsburg, but released him before they had gone very far.

1745

In 1745 an incident occurred in James City Parish which aroused the ire of the Governor and of the clergy of the Establishment to a high pitch, and no doubt made the way of the dissenter much harder. This episode took place at a man's house whose name was Joshua Morris. Now Joshua Morris, with his brother, John Morris, had withdrawn from the Established Church, and being a "dissenter" was therefore willing to permit a Presbyterian preacher, by the name of John Roan, to preach in his house. This Mr. Roan was "bold, energetic, earnest, but had less of caution and prudence than the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, required. He inveighed against the clergy of the Established Church with great freedom, charging them not only with neglect of their official duties, but with gross moral delinquencies. His offensive statements and scathing satire quickly attracted the attention of the parish clergy and their friends; and they resolved that he should no longer be tolerated. Affidavits were laid before Governor Gooch, representing that this man was not only earnestly engaged at proselytism, but had actually been guilty of blasphemy. The matter came before the Grand Jury; and, after the Governor had delivered a vehement charge, they agreed to "present John Roan for reflecting upon and vilifying the Established Religion, in divers sermons, preached at the house of Joshua Morris in James City Parish, on the 7th, 8th, and 9th of January, before a numerous audience unlawfully assembled."

Mr. Roan returned to Pennsylvania, before the meeting of the Court at which this charge was given. The charge was published, and an order forbidding any meetings of "Moravians, Muggletonians, and New Lights," was issued. The people of Hanover laid the case before the Synod of New York in May, 1745; and the Synod sent, by the hands of Messrs. Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Finley, an address to the Governor. These gentlemen were very graciously received by His Excellency, who readily granted them liberty to preach at Hanover. Before their arrival, the individual who had been chiefly instrumental in inflaming the government against Mr. Roan, and who was believed to have done it at the expense of perjuring himself, had fled never to return. The trial came on, on the 19th of October; but the six cited by the Attorney General, fully proved that he had uttered none of the expressions imputed to him, and the indictment was dropped." (Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*, Vol. III, pp. 129, 130.)

It is believed that this Joshua Morris, at whose home Mr. Roan preached this series of sermons, was the uncle of the Joshua Morris who founded the First Baptist Church, in Richmond. The first named Joshua Morris and his brother John had withdrawn from the Established Church, and being "dissenters" were willing to permit preaching in their homes by clergymen who did not belong to the Established Church. This was considered a heinous crime at that period of Virginia history—"a breach of the peace" and "contrary to law." Baptists in a few years would be arrested, fined, and imprisoned, not only for permitting an audience to assemble in their homes for preaching, but for even allowing one man to pray in a home.

In *The History of Virginia*, by T. S. Arthur and W. H. Carpenter (1852), pp. 228-229, there is a statement which may refer more particularly to the incident given above in connection with Mr. Roan, but it is applicable to the general situation in Virginia at that time. This statement follows:

"The attachment of the Virginians to the doctrines of the Church of England had frequently rendered them intolerant of the religious tenets of others. Even the mild, gentlemanly, and exemplary Gooch, was not free from this

narrow spirit. In his address to the grand jury in April 1745, he recommended to their attention certain false teachers lately crept into the province, who, without order or license, or producing any testimony of their education, or sect, had 'led the innocent and ignorant people into all kinds of delusion.' How far the presentments of the grand jury conformed to the spirit of his address has not been ascertained; but that the worthy, though prejudiced governor, expressed the sentiments of a great majority of the Virginians of that day, there does not exist the shadow of a doubt."

1747

Attention has already been called to the indictment of a Presbyterian minister in 1745, and what became of it. Just two years after this incident, in 1747, another Presbyterian preacher, Rev. Samuel Davies, one of the most godly and eminent men of his day, arrived in Williamsburg, in April, and "petitioned the General Court for a license to officiate at four different places of worship in and about Hanover. The petition was granted, chiefly through the influence of the Governor; though, at that time there were pending several civil suits against Dissenting ministers, for holding religious worship in a manner not recognized by the law of the Province." (Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*, Vol. III, pp. 140, 141.)

This case is mentioned to show that as early as 1747 there were "several civil suits" pending in the Virginia courts against Dissenting ministers; and also to call attention to the fact that Mr. Davies's petition was granted "chiefly through the influence of the Governor."

1751

Rev. Robert Rose, Rector of Parishes in Essex County, who afterwards moved to Nelson County, is said to have been a prominent man in church and civil affairs of his day. He died in 1751. In his frequent visits between Essex and Nelson he had to pass through Stafford, Spotsylvania, Louisa, Orange, Albemarle, and Culpeper counties. Bishop Meade's *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, Vol. I, page 399, contains this bit of information, which

may prove the scarcity of Baptists in that section, at that time, or it may mean that the Rector mentioned this case simply to show how he met and reproved the "ignorant" Baptist:

"Only once does he mention meeting with a Baptist,—an ignorant ploughman,—who tried to get him into a controversy about election and reprobation, and to whom the only advice he gave was, as he says, that of John the Baptist, that every man attend to his own business. The Baptists were then making considerable progress in Virginia, and I have no idea that Mr. Rose or any of the clergy of the Episcopal Church of that day were calculated to oppose them successfully."

KETOCTON OR KETOCTIN

October 8, 1751

The inroads of the Indians that interrupted the work on Opeckon creek causing John Garrard and many of the church to move below the Blue Ridge, and reside for some time in Loudon County, on Ketocton creek, proved to be a blessing in disguise. Semple's *History* (1810), page 290, has this to say about Mr. Garrard:

"He was not, while there, forgetful of his duty, but labored night and day for the instruction and salvation of sinners. God turned the hearts of many, who believing, were baptized."

Benedict's *History*, Vol. II, page 28, gives additional details:

"This evil was overruled for good, for by the labours of Mr. Garrard in his new residence, to which, by the barbarous intruders, he was obliged to repair, many were brought to a knowledge of salvation, and a church formed, which was called Ketockton, in 1756,* and Mr. Gerrard became their pastor."

When Mr. Gerrard returned to Opeckon, or Mill Creek, the care of the Ketocton church fell to Elder John Marks. "This,"

* The Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, 1707-1807, p. 93. gives the date "1751" instead of 1756.

says a footnote in Beale's revision of Semple's *History* (1894), page 394, "is the oldest church of the Baptist denomination in Virginia still existent. * * * The name since 1886 has been written Ketocin."*

1756

SMITH'S AND LINVILLE'S CREEK

August 6, 1756

The scene for the next Baptist church of that early day shifts from the northern part of the State to the north-western, Rockingham County. Semple's *History* (1810), page 290, gives its origin as follows:

"The Smith's and Linville's Creek church was constituted August 6th, 1756, under the pastoral care of John Alderson, sen. There had been some Baptists living in this place for about eleven years previous to the constitution of the church. These were probably a party of private members from some churches in the Philadelphia Association; or perhaps some of them from New England: for it is stated that John Harrison wishing to be baptized, went as far as Oyster bay in Massachusetts, to obtain that ordinance. As there were Baptist churches and ministers much nearer, the presumption is, that he had been led to that measure in consideration of some, if not all, of the Baptists of his neighborhood having come from thence."

Benedict's *History*, page 28, agrees with Dr. Semple, that Mr. Harrison went to "Oyster bay" to receive the ordinance of baptism, but locates the bay "on Long Island, in the State of New York," instead of Massachusetts.

* In an article in the *Religious Herald*, July 23, 1925, p. 3, by Dr. Powhatan W. James, on the "Ketocin" church, he says in part: "The word 'Ketocin' means 'The Ancient Wooded Hill.' From that day to the present time this church has had continuous services—monthly or oftener. Ketocin has built four houses of worship. The first was a log cabin built in 1756. The second was a larger log house built in 1780. The third was a stone structure, begun in 1800 and completed in 1815. The present splendid brick building was erected in 1854 and is in a fine state of preservation. The stone from the third church was used to build the walls around the large cemetery at the rear of the present building."

Semple's *History*, page 290, further explains the situation at Smith's and Linville's creek church, prior to its organization, by saying that:

"During the eleven years from the time the Baptists first came to this neighborhood, until the constitution of the church, they were visited by several preachers from the northern states, among whom were Mr. Samuel Eaton, Benjamin Griffith, John Gano, and John Alderson; the latter of whom afterwards settled among them and became their pastor."

In several footnotes in Beale's revision of Semple's *History*, page 378, he explains that Elder Benjamin Griffith was pastor of the Montgomery church, in Bucks County, Pa., at the time of his visit to Rockingham County; Elder John Gano had just closed a brief pastorate at Scotch Plains, N. J.; and Elder John Alderson was then living in Germantown, Pa. Elder John Alderson removed from Germantown in the year 1755, and settled in Rockingham County, Virginia, where in twelve months' time he constituted, on August 6, 1756, the Smith's and Linville's creek church. He remained their pastor for about sixteen years, when he moved to Botetourt County.

In Taylor's biographical sketch of John Alderson, Jr., it is stated on page 157:

"His father having about this time removed to Botetourt County, he was ordained and took charge of the Lynville Creek Church, October, 1775."

We have referred briefly to some of the early Baptist churches in Virginia as having sprung up in various sections of the State. They did not follow any regular order, or light their candles from those nearest to them, but sprang up here and there, like mushrooms in unexpected and out of the way places. They seem to have originated from independent and different sources, and had no connection with or relation to each other. First, there were the churches in Prince George, Surry and Isle of Wight—Burleigh, 1714. The next was in Berkeley County (Mill-creek, 1743); then Loudon County (Ketocton, 1751); and eventually Rockingham County (Smith's and Linville's Creek, 1756).

1755

These were among the early churches established in Virginia, but strange as it may seem we are not indebted to any one, or even all of them combined, for the very rapid rise and spread of Baptist doctrines throughout Virginia; but we must look to another State, North Carolina. It was from a church in this state that the early preachers came pouring into Virginia and proclaiming Baptist doctrines. We have already mentioned the visit of Elder Shubal Stearns, to the Opeckon, or Mill-creek church, in Berkeley County, Virginia, when he first came from New England in 1754. After halting here, he and his brother-in-law, Elder Daniel Marshall, "joined companies and settled for awhile on Cacapon in Hampshire county, about 30 miles from Winchester. Here not meeting with his expected success, he felt restless. Some of his friends having moved to North Carolina, he received letters from these, informing him, that preaching was greatly desired by the people of that country: That in some instances they had ridden 40 miles to hear one sermon. He and his party once more got under way, and travelling about 200 miles came to Sandy Creek, in Guilford county, N. Carolina. Here he took up his permanent residence. Soon after his arrival, viz. Nov. 22, 1755, he and his companions, to the number of 16, were constituted into a church called **Sandy Creek*, and to which Mr. Stearns was appointed pastor." (Semple's *History* (1810), page 3.)



SANDY CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
IN NORTH CAROLINA

This old building, if not the original of this church, is still standing a distance of several miles from Ashboro, N. C.

*Sandy Creek church soon increased from 16 souls (eight men and their wives), to 606 members. But seventeen years later, because of provincial troubles, the number was reduced to 14 souls.

1757

First Yearly Meeting

We must return for a moment, to the first Baptist churches in Virginia, and note their activities, before following the workers sent out from Sandy Creek.

"On the second Sunday in June, 1757, the Mill-creek, Ketoc-ton, and Smith's and Linville's Creek churches, held their first yearly meeting at the meeting house of the last named church." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 290.)

"The three churches above named became members of the Philadelphia Association soon after their constitution, and so continued until they formed an independent association. Previous to this however, they met in an annual or yearly meeting, alternately at the three meeting houses. In the yearly meetings, preaching was kept up for several days, ministers from distant parts attended, and consultations were holden respecting the propagation of the gospel, as well as advice offered for the good government of the infant churches. These meetings greatly accelerated the spread of the gospel, and also ripened the churches for a separate association." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 291.)

These three churches came into existence at an opportune time, for there was a growing dissatisfaction with the Establishment. Frank L. Hawks, in his *Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of the United States* (1836), page 120, was writing about the situation that existed in 1757, when he said:

"There was growing up in men's minds a gradual alienation from the church, because it was identified with those who were suspected of being more anxious to enrich themselves than to benefit the souls of others, and men began to admit the suspicion that the establishment was proving a burden instead of a blessing."

1759

The Rev. Andrew Burnaby, A.M., Vicar of Greenwich, England, paid a visit to Virginia in the year 1759, and an account of his travels was published in London in 1775. *The Historical*

Register for 1852, reprinted this account, and on page 83, Mr. Burnaby has this to say about the situation in Virginia:

“The established religion is that of the church of England; and there are very few Dissenters of any denomination in this province. There are at present between sixty and seventy clergymen: men in general of sober and exemplary lives. They have each a glebe of two or three hundred acres of land, a house, and a salary established by law of 16,000 weight of tobacco, with an allowance of 1700 more for shrinkage. This is delivered to them in hogsheads ready packed for exportation, at the most convenient warehouse.”

It is interesting to see ourselves as others see us, but do not overlook the fact that men usually see what they are looking for. This clergyman saw many Rectors, but very few dissenters. However the latter were multiplying rapidly and soon would make themselves felt in the province. His visit was on the verge of an era that was marked by the addition of Baptist churches, both in the northern and southern parts of the colony. The next year, 1760, witnessed the organization of a church that was destined to be the mother church of many Baptist churches for miles around.

CHAPTER III

1760-1765

EARLY LABOURS OF DAVID THOMAS, SAMUEL HARRISS
AND JAMES REED

DAN RIVER

Constituted 4th Friday in August, 1760

"In the parts of Virginia, adjacent to the Sandy Creek church in North Carolina, the gospel had been quickly carried by Daniel Marshall. He had baptized several in some of his first visits. Among them was Dutton Lane, who shortly after his baptism began to preach—a revival succeeded, and Mr. Marshall at one time baptized 42 persons. In August 1760, a church was constituted under the pastoral care of Rev. Dutton Lane. This was the first Separate Baptist Church in Virginia, and, in some sense, the mother of all the rest. The church prospered under the ministry of Mr. Lane, aided by the occasional visits of Mr. Marshall and Mr. Stearns. They endured much persecution, but God prospered them, and delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies." (Semple's *History* (1810), page 5.)

This church, Dan River, was so called from a branch of the Roanoke river near which the meeting house was subsequently built, on land given by Nicholas Perkins, in the county of Pittsylvania, during the year 1767. The pastor, Dutton Lane, had five different stations and five assistants, at the time Morgan Edwards gathered his notes in 1772. One of these assistant pastors was Richard Elkins. On page 9 of Morgan Edwards' manuscript *Notes*, he gives the following as one of the remarkable things that happened in connection with the Dan River church; which, he says, was constituted "Aug. 4th frid. 1760 by means of Rev. mess. Mulkey and Marshall:"

RICHARD ELKINS

*Persecutors Frightened by a Strong Glare of Light,
and They Returned Home*

"James Roberts was going to Col. Gorden for a warrant in 1769 against Rich. Elkins. As Roberts and another were

travelling for the warrant in the night a strong glare of light shone about them in so much that the horses squatted on the ground; and was succeeded by such thick darkness that they could not see any thing. Roberts concluded it was a warning to him and thence forth ceased to be an opposer."

Morgan Edwards' *Volumes*, page 18, gives this event in fuller detail which we also include in these sketches:

"Great opposition of magistrates and mobs rose as this church rose into being, till the following event abated its fury—One James Roberts had been a grievous thorn in their side; but finding his party insufficient in the mobbing way, he, and another, went to Col. Gardner for authority to seize some of the principal men among them; as they were going, the night came on, a strong glare of light shone round them on a sudden, in so much that the horses fell squat on the ground as hares are wont to do; this glare was succeeded by such thick darkness that they could no more see anything than if they had been blind; in this situation they continued for some time, so astonished that they spake not a word one to another; neither did the horses stir till the riders began to recover sight: Then they returned, without speaking a word till they reached home: both Roberts and his companion agreed that this strange event was a warning to them; and those who heard of it were of the same mind; which procured quietness to the poor Baptists."

Fristoe's *History*, page 85, bears this testimony with reference to the situation here in Virginia during this era of persecution:

"It was evident that a tremor sometimes took hold of those opposers, lest they should be found fighting against God—and where such distress has taken hold in the breast of a persecutor, he has declined touching God's anointed, or doing his prophet farther harm."

Semple states that the Baptists in the neighborhood of Dan River church "endured much persecution," but the above incident with reference to James Roberts and the following concerning Dutton Lane have come down to us. We have no doubt there were many other efforts to thwart their activities, but the records have not been preserved. The pastor of this church was once on

a missionary tour, when the magistrate of the county ordered him never to come there again to preach :

“Mr. Lane was once preaching at a place called Meherrin, in Lunenburg County, where a Mr. Joseph Williams, a magistrate, charged him, before the whole congregation, not to come there to preach again. Mr. Lane mildly replied, that as there were many other places where he could preach without interruption, he did not know that he should come there again shortly. After wishing peace to the rest of the company, he gravely addressed Mr. Williams, and said, “Little, sir, as you now think it, my impressions tell me that you will become a Baptist, a warm espouser of that cause which you now persecute.” This prediction came to pass ; for, in about twelve years, Williams embraced religion, was baptized, and became a zealous member and useful deacon in the church that was afterwards formed at that place.” (Taylor’s *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, First Series (1860), p. 30.)

“Having now constituted several churches, and there being some others that exercised the rights of churches, tho’ not formally organized, Mr. Stearns conceived that an association composed of delegates from all these, would have a tendency to impart stability, regularity, and uniformity to the whole. For this prudent purpose, he visited each church and congregation, and explaining the contemplated plan, induced them all to send delegates to his meeting house the ensuing January, which was in the year 1760.” (Semple’s *History* (1810), p. 6.)

They met accordingly in January, and again in July of the same year, the list of churches at both meetings being as follows :

Sandy Creek.....	Elder Shubal Stearns
Deep River.....	Nathaniel Powel (a brother)
Abbot’s Creek.....	Elder Daniel Marshall
Little River.....	Joseph Breed (a brother)
Neus River.....	Ezekiel Hunter
Black River	John Newton
Dan River, Pittsylvania C’ty, Va.....	Elder Samuel Harris
Lunenburg C’ty, Va.....	William Murphy

(Semple’s *History* (1810), p. 43.)

Morgan Edwards in speaking of Dan River's first pastor, Dutton Lane, has preserved the following facts about him :

"Mr. Lane is no scholar ; but having naturally a robust constitution, a strong voice, with the addition of zeal and vehemence, his ministry has been attended with surprising effects. His own father was so violent an opposer of the Baptists that he beat his wife for going to hear them, and pursued his own son Dutton with an intention to slay him ; he also went a great way to fetch a clergyman of the church of England to oppose their ministry ; but after all, was forced to submit, and was baptized by the son whom he would have slain.

"One Wm. Cocker had conceived such a malignity against the Baptists that he was wont to say 'He had rather go to hell than to heaven if going to the latter required his being a baptist' ; but coming accidentally to hear Dutton Lane this same malignant fell to the ground roaring, 'Lord have mercy upon me ! I am a gone man ! What shall I do to be saved ?' In this manner went he on for an hour ; and now he is a humble & pious baptist." (Morgan Edwards's *Volumes*, p. 19.)

Frequent reference will be made in these sketches to the information gathered by Morgan Edwards in Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas, between the years 1770-1772, and recorded in note books—one for each province. These notebooks were later expanded into what he called *Volumes*. In the following pages the words *Notes* and *Volumes* will be used to designate the source and authority for the given information. Mr. Edwards original manuscript of *Notes on Virginia*, is now in the library of the American Baptist Historical Society, at Chester, Pennsylvania. His *Volume* on Virginia is now in the possession of Mr. Alester G. Furman, of Greenville, South Carolina, and a "copy" is on file in the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, at University of Richmond, Virginia.

The Roanoke Religious Correspondent, or *Monthly Evangelical Visitant*, published at Milton, N. C., December, 1825, Vol. II, No. 12, page 181, states that :

"In the year 1760, from the most authentic accounts, Baptists of every order in Virginia amounted to 5 churches, 5 ordained ministers, 2 licensed preachers, and about 500 members."

From the following quotations it may be seen how the early Baptists were regarded by some of the inhabitants:

"We come now to give a narrative of the treatment the baptists met with from their neighbors and countrymen at their first rise among us and for a considerable time after and some instances to the present time, they were stigmatized with every name that malice could invent—the general term of reproach with which the preachers and baptist people were clothed, was that of new-light."

* * * * *

"The new-lights were charged with being disturbers of the peace, that they had occasioned uneasiness and disquietude in the minds of the people, when there was no necessity for it, and that such a people ought to be treated with contempt, ridicule and disgrace."

* * * * *

"The cant word was, they are an ignorant illiterate set—and of the poor and contemptible class of the people."

* * * * *

"They were charged with design—the vain supposition was that if the baptists could succeed, and have a large increase of converts to their party—when once they supposed themselves sufficiently strong, that they would fall on their fellow subjects, massacre the inhabitants and take possession of the country." (From the *History of the Ketoc-ton Baptist Association* (1808), pp. 63-65.)

1761

BLACKWATER

Organized in 1761

The next church, according to Morgan Edwards *Notes*, page 11, was a church gathered by William Murphy, called Blackwater, after a branch of the Staunton river, "near to which the meeting house stands in the county of Pittsylvania. * * * They began at Staunton, in the year 1761 when about 25 were constituted into a dsitinct church: these had been converted and baptized by Wm. Morphy."

Joseph and William Murphy were reproachfully called "the Murphy boys," because of their youth. They travelled so extensively in the State of Virginia in that early day, that we are not able to determine in what county it was that Joseph Murphy was taken by a magistrate for preaching.

JOSEPH MURPHY

Arrested and Carried Before a Magistrate, But Released

Semple's *History* (1810,) page 392, states that: "He was once taken up, and carried before a magistrate for preaching; but he defended himself so expertly, that the magistrate bade him go about his business. He is now respected as a venerable old man."

Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), page 29, thus refers to the same incident, but does not give the place, or county:

"He was not easily daunted by the opposition of his foes. When, on a certain occasion, he was apprehended and tried for daring to preach without a warrant from the establishment, he defended himself in the most manly and Christian-like style. Such was the impression produced on the minds of those who heard him, that he was at once acquitted and set at liberty."

1762

PUNGO—(OAK GROVE)

Organized in 1762

The Pungo church near Back Bay in lower Princess Anne County named after an Indian chief who trailed and hunted in that county when the English came was organized in 1762 as a result of the labors of Charles Daniel and John Burgess, and shares with the Broad Run church in Fauquier County the distinction of being the second oldest Baptist church in Virginia. "The name of the church was changed in 1856 to Oak Grove, and under this title they still exist."

BROAD RUN*

Organized December 3, 1762

Following the churches in their chronological order of constitution, the scene shifts from one of the lower counties to one in the northern part of the State—Fauquier. The first Baptist church to be constituted in Fauquier County, was Broad Run, and its origin is given in Semple's *History* (1810), pages 291 and 292, as follows:

"About 1760, David Thomas, from Pennsylvania, came to Berkley in Virginia, on a ministerial visit. A small time previous to this, two men in the county of Fauquier, on Broadrun, had, without any public preaching, become convinced of the reality of vital religion, and that they were destitute of it. Wrought upon by such convictions, and hearing of the Baptists in Berkley, they travelled thither, a distance of about sixty miles, to hear them. When they arrived and heard the gospel, it proved a sweet savour of life. They returned home, God built them up by his spirit, and, in a short time, they made a second visit to Berkley, offered an experience of grace to the church, and were baptized. It so happened, that these men and Mr. David Thomas came to Berkley at the same time. They invited him to go down to Fauquier and preach, and he accepted the invitation.

* * * * * *

After Mr. Thomas had laboured awhile at Broadrun, and in the adjacent neighborhood, his labours were so much favoured, that he resolved to become a resident among them. Many professed faith, and were baptized. A church was quickly constituted, to which Mr. Thomas was chosen pastor. This took place a little after the year 1760."

Benedict's *History*, pages 29 and 30, gives Broadrun's origin in fuller detail:

"The origin of the Broadrun church, and the manner in which Mr. Thomas was introduced among them, are related

* "It may be noted that the records of Broad Run Church show the admission of Nancy Hanks in 1778 and Luke Hanks in 1779 and that in 1785 they moved to Carolina. They were of the maternal family of Abraham Lincoln." (Footnote in Fairfax Harrison's *Landmarks of Old Prince William* (1924), p. 238.)

as follows. A short time previous to his removing to Virginia, two men in this region, without any public preaching, became much concerned about their souls and eternal things, were convinced of the reality of vital religion, and that they were destitute of it. While labouring under these convictions, they heard of the Baptists (New Lights, as some called them), in Berkley county, and set out in search of them; and after travelling about sixty miles over a rough and mountainous way, they arrived amongst them, and by their preaching and conversation were much enlightened and comforted, and were so happy as to find what had hitherto to them been mysterious, how a weary and heavy laden sinner might have rest. The name of one of these men was Peter Cornwell, who afterwards lived to a good old age, and was so eminent for his piety, as to receive from his neighbours and acquaintance the title of 'Saint Peter.' It is related by Mr. Edwards, 'that this Peter Cornwell induced Edmund Hays (the same man who removed from Maryland to Virginia, in 1743), to remove and settle near him, and that interviews between the families of these two men were frequent, and their conversation religious and devout: insomuch that it soon began to be talked of abroad as a very strange thing. Many came to see them, to whom they related what God had done for their souls, exhorted, prayed, and read the Bible, and other good books, to the spreading of seriousness through the whole neighborhood.' Cornwell and his companion (whose name is not mentioned), in a short time made a second visit to Berkley, and were baptized: and Divine Providence had so ordered matters, that in this visit they met with Mr. Thomas, whom they invited to go down and preach amongst them. He accepted the invitation, and settled with them, as before related, and soon became the instrument of diffusing gospel light in Fauquier and the adjacent counties, where ignorance and superstition had long prevailed."

Morgan Edwards's manuscript (*Notes*, page 40), gives additional details concerning Broadrun church:

"It was named afer 'A run which goes into Ockiquon.
* * "The house (in) Faquire county 36 by 24 built in 1769
on land given by Thos. Dodson. * * Begun Dec. 3, 1762
by D. T. and Marks. Peter Cornwell got concerned in the
wood without means then went to Edmond Hays, and

brought them down to his land; then the neighbours came to see the 2 baptists many were affected went to hear Garret and were baptized—invited him to preach, then built a little meeting house. Then invited D. T. who baptized many. First minister (2) Amos Thompson Dispute about 4 years.”

The “Garret” mentioned above must have been John Garrard, who was pastor of the Mill-creek church in Berkley County, where it seems these two disciples were baptized. It would also appear from Mr. Edwards’s *Notes* that Mr. Garrard was the first to preach in the neighborhood of Broad-run church, that he was followed by David Thomas who eventually became their pastor, and that Amos Thompson succeeded him.

John P. Kennedy’s *Life of William Wirt* (1850), Vol. II, page 386, contains Mr. Wirt’s estimate of David Thomas in a letter to his friend Mr. Pope. Mr. Wirt states that he lived in the neighborhood of Seneca meeting-house in Maryland for eighteen months, and that:

“Towards the close of that time we had a most learned man established as the regular preacher. His name was Thomas, a Doctor of Divinity. He was a strange old gentleman, as solitary in his habits as a ghost. He took no part in the management of his domestic affairs, but left all worldly business to his wife, and devoted himself exclusively to his books and his pulpit. He was so very nearsighted as to be almost blind; a very ungainly, little old man with a cracked voice, and odd and awkward in his delivery. Yet that man was very near running me mad. I was only sixteen or seventeen years old, extremely susceptible and tenderhearted, and he made such dead-sets at me, that I was within an ace of insanity. If my physician had not advised me to seek a southern climate (for I had some consumptive symptoms), I should either have died in a lunatic asylum or become a Baptist preacher. I went to Georgia, passed one winter, and returned cured of my consumption and religious enthusiasm.”

David Thomas, the first pastor of Broad-run, was probably the most learned and scholarly of our early preachers. Benedict’s *History*, page 30, thus describes him:

DAVID THOMAS

Pulled Down While Preaching and Dragged Out of Doors

"Mr. Thomas is said to have been a minister of great distinction in the prime of his life; for besides the natural endowments of a strong and vigorous mind, and the advantages of a classical and refined education, he had a melodious and piercing voice, pathetic address, expressive action, and, above all, a heart filled with love for God and his fellow-men, whom he saw overwhelmed in sin and misery. But for a few of the first years of his ministry in Virginia, he met with much rustick persecution from the rude inhabitants, who, as a satirical historian observes, '*had not wit enough to sin in a genteel manner*'."

DAVID THOMAS

Attempt Made to Shoot Him

"Outrageous mobs and individuals frequently assaulted and disturbed him. Once he was pulled down as he was preaching, and dragged out of doors in a barbarous manner. At another time a malevolent fellow attempted to shoot him, but a by-stander wrenched the gun from him, and thereby prevented the execution of his wicked purpose. 'The slanders and revilings,' says Mr. Edwards, 'which he met with, are innumerable; and if we may judge of a man's prevalency against the devil, by the rage of the devil's children, Thomas prevailed like a prince'."

Beale's *Semple*, page 381, gives in a footnote this comment on David Thomas's preaching and personality:

"One who heard him in Richmond county Oct. 22, 1780, mentions him as 'that great old servant of God.' He records hearing him again December 27, 1781, and adds: 'Oh, that I may never forget that sweet sermon—a message from God to me that day!'"

David Thomas, like so many other Virginia preachers, removed to Kentucky, and ended his days there. He moved at a time when most men prefer the old familiar scenes to new and untried fields, for he was nearly three score and ten years old at the time he left Virginia. He lived to be more than four-score years old,

and for a long time before his death was entirely blind. "Elder Thomas was suddenly called to his heavenly home. He had sought a brief repose upon his couch, and gently sinking into a soft, sweet slumber, he awoke no more on earth. Blessed rest! The rest of the holy is his!" (Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), pp. 47, 48.)

AMOS THOMPSON

Attention has already been called to the statement of Morgan Edwards that Amos Thompson was the second pastor of Broad-run. It is probable that his first visit in the neighborhood of that church was made at the urgent invitation of Mr. Thomas and under very peculiar circumstances. One of the favorite expressions of that early day, for a preacher or a church in trouble, was to speak of "sending for helps." But it was not very often that it was intended to mean *physical* help, as it was in this case. We are indebted to our Presbyterian brethren for preserving this interesting account of what may have been Mr. Thompson's first visit to the church that he afterwards served as pastor.

Dr. Archibald Alexander, a prominent Presbyterian minister of that early day, has preserved this interesting incident about Elder David Thomas. Dr. Alexander was visiting his father-in-law, Dr. James Waddell, celebrated as the Blind Preacher of Wirt's *British Spy*, who was then residing on his estate, at the junction of three counties, Louisa, Orange and Albemarle:

"While I remained there," says Dr. Alexander, "a clergyman came to the house, of whom I had often heard, though I had never seen him. The Rev. Amos Thompson, who had long resided in Loudon County, Virginia, was a man of gigantic frame, but not in the least inclined to corpulency. His bodily strength was prodigious, several proofs of which I had from himself. He came to the northern part of Virginia, before the Revolutionary War; and before his arrival, the Baptists were the only dissenters in that part of the country. Old Father Thomas, one of their leading preachers,

* A footnote in Beale's *Semple* (1894), p. 21, states that David Thomas, while "in Virginia" was "a noble champion of religious liberty, and suffered severe persecutions. Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry held him in high esteem, and he highly valued them as friends of liberty. He will long be remembered as the author of a stirring poem on "Freedom."

and a man of many oddities, had been threatened with personal violence by a set of profane and lawless men, if he should ever show his face in a certain pulpit, where he had preached for some time. The old man took a journey of twenty or thirty miles, to obtain the presence of Amos Thompson at the aforesaid place. Thompson, being fearless and fond of adventure, at once agreed to go and preach for him. When they arrived, a great multitude had assembled, some to hear the preacher, and some to see the sport, for the ruffians had sworn that they would beat old Thomas."

DAVID THOMAS

Ruffians Armed with Bludgeons to Beat Him

"While Mr. Thompson was at prayer, a company armed with bludgeons entered the house, and took their position just before the pulpit; but when they saw the brawny arm and undaunted appearance of the preacher, they became alarmed and permitted the service to go on to its conclusion. I ought to have stated, that at the close of his discourse, Mr. Thompson addressed himself directly to these men, and expostulated with them on the unlawfulness of their proceedings; assuring them, that Mr. Thomas, though a dissenter, was under the protection of the law, and that if a finger should be raised against him, the law should be put in force, for that he would spend all the little property he possessed in seeing that justice was done. He concluding by saying, that although he was a preacher, and a man of peace, he held it to be right, when attacked to defend himself, which he was ready and able to do. When the meeting was ended, he went out of the house and inquired for the captain of the band. Being led to the spot where they were collected, he approached this man, and asked him to go aside with him. A stout, bold-looking man walked off with him towards the woods, on entering which he appeared to be panic-struck, stopped, and raised his club. Thompson said, 'Fie, man, what can you do with that?' and in a moment wrested it out of his hand, adding that he intended no violence, but that if so disposed, he could hurl him to earth in a moment. The ruffian was completely overawed, and was glad to escape from so powerful an antagonist.

Father Thomas received no further molestation." (From Dr. James W. Alexander's *Life of Archibald Alexander*, D.D., pp. 228-230.)

Morgan Edwards not only states that at Broad-run there was a "Dispute about 3 years" in connection with this preacher; but on page 44, he refers to Bull-run church and adds "where Thompson failed after preaching 3 years." The nature of the "Dispute" and the cause of Mr. Thompson's "failure" have not been preserved. Mr. Edwards also makes the statement that "Amos Thompson came the second time he (Richard Major) preached to oppose." Perhaps this "dispute" and "failure" may have been due to some new-fangled theological views that he had imbibed from the Rev. Samuel Hopkins, of Newport. In *The Life of Archibald Alexander, D.D.*," by his son Dr. James W. Alexander, on page 230, this explanatory paragraph may be found:

"Thompson was a graduate of Princeton College (in 1760). while Mr. Davies was President. He was, I think, a native of Connecticut. Soon after being licensed, having heard that the Rev. Samuel Hopkins had adopted some novel opinions in theology, he took horse and travelled to Newport, to converse with this celebrated man, and if possible to convince him of his errors. The result was, that after discussing points for several days, he came away a thorough convert to Dr. Hopkins' system, to which he tenaciously adhered until his dying day, and which he preached on all occasions, filling the minds of the untheological Virginians with astonishment, and often with displeasure."

1763

The year following the organization of Broad-run church we find her pastor, Elder David Thomas, extending his ministerial labors to adjacent counties. He was "the first Baptist preacher that proclaimed the gospel of peace in the counties of Orange and Culpeper, which took place in the year 1763. His preaching was in power and demonstration of the spirit." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 177.)

1765

The two streams of Baptist influence, which had for several years been flowing into the State of Virginia from the north and

the south, finally met in 1765 in Culpeper County, when Allen Wyley, who had been baptized by David Thomas of Fauquier, sought and obtained a preacher from Pittsylvania County to come and break the bread of life in Culpeper County. At least seven years before this pilgrimage of Wyley a prominent man of affairs of Pittsylvania County had been converted and God began to prepare him for the great work he was destined to accomplish, not only in Culpeper County, but in many other counties in the State. He was Samuel Harriss, who at various times had occupied several prominent stations in society—such as “church warden, colonel of the militia, captain of Mayo Fort, and commissary for the fort and army.” To fill all of these offices he was, without doubt, well qualified, not only by the kindness of his heart and his engaging manners, but by the possession of a vigorous and cultivated mind.” (Taylor’s *Lives Virginia Baptist Ministers*, First Series (1860), p. 31.)

Elder Samuel Harriss was thirty-four years of age before he heard the gospel as preached by the Baptists, “a sect of people who for some time had been exciting much attention by the simplicity and zeal with which they recommended the truth of God,” and his first attendance upon a Baptist service is graphically described in Taylor’s *Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), Series I, page 31:

“In the perplexity and distress of mind, Mr. Harris determined to be present at some of their meetings. It is said that when engaged in the army, in the discharge of his official duties, he providentially found an opportunity of hearing the gospel by Joseph and William Murphy, who had appointed a meeting at a house near Allen’s Creek, on the road leading from Booker’s Ferry, on Staunton, to Pittsylvania Court-house. As the people were collecting, Colonel Harris rode up, splendidly attired in his military habit. ‘What is to be done here, gentlemen?’ said Harris. ‘Preaching, colonel.’ ‘Who is to preach?’ ‘The Murphy boys, sir.’ ‘I believe I will stop and hear them.’ He dismounted. The house was small, and in the corner stood a loom, behind which the colonel seated himself. The Lord’s eye was upon him, and the truth became effectual in deepening his convictions. Such was his agony of mind, that at the close of the meeting his sword and other parts of his regimentals were found scattered around him.”

DAN RIVER
Constituted in 1760

In 1758 Samuel Harris was baptized by Daniel Marshall who was a constituent member of Shubal Stearn's church in North Carolina, from which point he made many missionary journeys into this State. At one time Mr. Marshall baptized 42 persons in the neighborhood of the Dan River church, of which Mr. Harris was a constituent member when it was organized in 1760.

With reference to these three men who were such towers of strength in the vineyard of the Lord in that early day, Benedict's *History*, has this to say on page 41 :

"While Marshall was sojourning southward and planting churches in the various places where he pitched his frequent habitations, Harris bent his course to the northward, amongst his rude and insolent countrymen the Virginians; and while his brethren were thus engaged to the north and south of him, Stearns maintained his station at Sandy-creek, where his labours were greatly blessed; he however often travelled a considerable distance in the country around, to assist in organizing and regulating the churches which he and his associates were instrumental in raising up. Thus the Separate Baptists were headed by three most distinguished men; distinguished not for human acquirements, but for purity of life, and godly simplicity, which they, amidst the shipwrecks of many, maintained to the end; and for pious ardour and invincible boldness and perseverance in their Master's service."

Samuel Harris commenced preaching the year after his baptism and continued for seven or eight years to labour principally in Pittsylvania and the neighboring counties. He was thus engaged when Allen Wyley took his noted pilgrimage in 1765. Mr. Wyley was still living when Semple's *History* was written and he furnished the author the following account, which may be found on pages 7 and 8 of the 1810 edition of that work :

"In January, 1765, Allen Wyley, an inhabitant of Culpeper, who had been baptized by David Thomas, hearing of the *Separate Baptist Preachers*, travelled from Culpeper to Pittsylvania, in order to get one or more of them to come

and preach in Culpeper. He travelled on, scarcely knowing whither he went. An unseen hand directed his course. He providentially fell in with one of Mr. Harriss' meetings. When he came into the meeting house, Mr. H. fixed his eyes upon him, being impressed previously that he had some extraordinary message. He asked him whence he came, &c. Mr. W. told him his errand. Upon which, after some deliberation, believing him sent of God, Mr. Harriss agreed to go. Taking three days to prepare, he started with Wyley, having no meetings on the way, yet exhorting and praying at every house where he went.

SAMUEL HARRISS

Meeting in Culpeper Broken up by a Mob with Whips, Sticks, and Clubs

"Arriving in Culpeper, his first meeting was at Wyley's own house. He preached the first day without interruption, and appointed for the next. He the next day began to preach, but the opposers immediately raised violent opposition, appearing with whips, sticks, clubs, &c. so as to hinder his labours; in consequence of which he went that night over to Orange county, and preached with much effect. He continued many days preaching from place to place, attended by great crowds, and followed throughout his meetings by several persons who had been either lately converted, or seriously awakened, under the ministry of the *Regular Baptists*, and also by many who had been alarmed by his own labours. * * * In this ministerial journey, Mr. Harriss sowed many good seed, yielding afterwards great increase."

SAMUEL HARRISS

Door Battered Down Which Brought on a Fight

Rough was the treatment which Mr. Harriss met with amongst his rude countrymen. In one of his journeys in the county of Culpeper, a Capt. Ball and his gang came to a place where he was preaching, and said, "You shall not preach here." A bystander, whose name was Jeremiah Minor, replied, "But he shall." From this sharp contention of words, they proceeded to a sharper contest of blows and scuffles. Friends on both sides interested themselves; some to make peace, and others to back their fore-

man. The supporters of Mr. Harriss were probably most of them worldly people, who acted from no other motive, than to defend a minister thus insulted and abused. But if they were Christians, they were certainly too impatient and resentful, and manifested too much of the spirit of Peter when he drew his sword on the high-priest's servant. Col. Harriss's friends took him into a house, and set Lewis Craig to guard the door, while he was preaching; but presently Ball's gang came up, drove the sentinel from his stand, and battered open the door; only to be driven back by the people within. This involved them in another contest, and thus the day ended in confusion.

SAMUEL HARRISS

*Arrested as a Vagabond, a Schismatic, and a
Disturber of the Peace*

"On another occasion he was arrested and carried into Court, as a disturber of the peace. In Court, a Capt. Williams vehemently accused him as a vagabond, a heretic, and a mover of sedition every where. Mr. Harris made his defence. But the Court ordered that he should not preach in the county again for the space of twelve months, or be committed to prison. The Colonel told them that he lived two hundred miles from thence, and that it was not likely he should disturb them again in the course of a year. Upon this he was dismissed. From Culpeper he went to Fauquier, and preached at Carter's Run. From thence he crossed the Blue Ridge, and preached at Shenandoah. On his return from thence, he turned in at Capt. Thomas Clanathan's, in the county of Culpeper, where there was a meeting. While certain young ministers were preaching, the word of God began to burn in Col. Harris's heart. When they finished, he arose and addressed the congregation, 'I partly promised the devil, a few days past, at the court-house, that I would not preach in this county again for the term of a year; but the devil is a perfidious wretch, and covenants with him are not to be kept, and therefore I will preach.' He preached a lively, animating sermon. The Court never meddled with him more." (David Benedict's *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America*," Vol. II, pp. 335, 336.)

In Morgan Edwards's manuscript *Notes*, page 6, we have his version of these two instances of persecution of Samuel Harriss in Culpeper County. Mr. Edwards says :

"Taken by capt. Ball in Culpeper, whom Jeremiah Minor opposed till they got a fighting and so got off to a house—they break the door and wer thrust out and fought again—Captain Jemeson sent Mr Harris up stairs and set a guard at the stair foot, and at last preached—Taken up again by Capt Ball and brought to court—impeached by capt. Williams of being a vagabond, a schismatic, disturber of the peace &—dismissed by the court after straitly charging them to preach there no more."

If the reader thinks it strange that so distinguished a preacher as Elder Samuel Harriss should be subjected to such indignities as were heaped upon him, let him remember that there are rough characters who take particular pleasure in inflicting such treatment upon those who occupy a higher station in life than they do, when ever they get them in their clutches. In this connection we are reminded of how the mother country treated the celebrated Richard Baxter. John Whitecross's *Anecdotes*, Vol. II, page 137, gives an incident in Mr. Baxter's life that is apropos: "In the reign of king James II, Mr. Baxter was committed prisoner to the King's Bench, by the warrant of Lord Chief-Justice Jeffries, for some alleged seditious passages in his Paraphase on the New Testament. When brought to his trial, being very much indisposed, he moved, by his counsel, for further time; but the judge cried out in a passion: 'I will not give him a minute's time to save his life; we have had to deal with other sorts of persons, but now we have a saint to deal with. I know how to deal with saints as well as sinners. Yonder stands Oates in the pillory, and he says he suffers for truth, and so says Baxter; but if Baxter did but stand on the other side of the pillory with him, I would say, two of the greatest rogues and rascals in the kingdom stood there!' Mr. Baxter beginning to speak for himself, Jeffries said to him, 'Richard, Richard, dost thou think we will hear thee poison the court? Richard, thou art an old fellow, and old knave; thou hast written books enow to fill a cart, every one as full of sedition, I may say treason, as an egg is full of meat. Hadst thou been

whipt out of thy writing forty years ago, it had been happy. I know thou hast a mighty party, and I see a great many of the brotherhood in corners, to see what will become of their mighty Don, and a Doctor of the party—meaning Dr. Bates—at your elbow; but by the grace of Almighty God, I'll crush them all.' After further mockery and insult from this blustering judge, Mr. Baxter was condemned to pay a heavy fine, and to remain in prison till it was paid. He continued in prison two years, when from a change of measures, he was set at liberty."

Neither in the old country nor in Virginia did learning, position or piety avail anything. The saintly Baxter, the scholarly Thomas, and the militant figure, Colonel Harriss, are all showered with abuses and vilifications.

SAMUEL HARRISS

Knocked Down While Preaching

Elder Samuel Harriss, who was so largely instrumental in introducing the gospel in Culpeper and Orange counties in the early sixties of the eighteenth century, received rough handling in these counties, and in the Old North State also. One item of imprisonment, and one of extreme barbarity, that fell to the lot of this good man is thus described by Benedict's *History* (1813), Vol. II, page 337:

"Near Haw-river, a rude fellow came up to Mr. Harris, and knocked him down while he was preaching."

The item of imprisonment is from the same source, Benedict's *History*, same page:

SAMUEL HARRISS

Locked up in Jail and Kept There for Sometime

"He went to preach to the prisoners once, in the town of Hillsborough, where he was locked up in the goal, and kept for some time."

Newman's *America* (1881), page 262, states that the longest drought ever known in America occurred in the summer of 1762, when no rain fell for 132 days in succession. But a more serious

drought than lack of rain pervaded the land at that time. The spiritual showers had been delayed for many years, but were at this time descending upon many parched and dreary places in Virginia. They were not confined to any particular locality but were noticed in various sections of our State.

Francis L. Hawks in his *Contribution to the Ecclesiastical History of the United States of America* (1836), page 122, says that the Baptists first made their appearance in Amelia County in 1765. We quote several paragraphs from this work to show the situation as it existed at that time:

"It was in the midst of this growing spirit of disaffection towards the church that a new and, as events proved a most inveterate enemy appeared. About the year 1765 and while the Rev. Mr. Robinson was commissary, the Baptists first made their appearance in Amelia and some of the adjacent counties, and by insisting on the peculiar tenets of their sect, they began to shake the faith of many who belonged to the church.

"It must not, however, be supposed that, previous to this time, none of the sect had been seen in Virginia. The first who came were emigrants as early as the year 1714; others also came from Maryland in the year 1743; but their increase was small for a long time after their introduction. There was a bitterness in the hatred of this denomination towards the establishment, which far surpassed that of all other religious communities in the colony; and it was always prompt (as the future pages of our work will show) to avail itself of every prejudice which religious or political zeal could excite against the church. Their first preachers came from the North, and some few from the South; all met with opposition from those in power, 'The ministers (says Leland) were imprisoned, and the disciples buffeted.' This is but too true. No dissenters in Virginia experienced for a time harsher treatment than did the Baptists. They were beaten and imprisoned; and cruelty taxed its ingenuity to devise new modes of punishment and annoyance. The usual consequence followed: persecution made friends for its victims; and the men who were not permitted to speak in public, found willing auditors in the sympathizing crowds who gathered around the prisons to hear them preach from the grated windows. It is not improbable that this very

opposition imparted strength in another mode inasmuch as it at least furnished the Baptists with a common ground on which to make resistance; and such common ground was in a great degree wanting in their creed; for not to speak of their great division into Regulars and Separates, some 'held to predestination, others to universal provision; some adhered to a confession of faith, others would have none but the Bible; some practised laying on of hands, others did not,' and in fact, the only particular in which there seems to have been unanimity, was in the favourite exclusive opinion of the sect, that none but adult believers are fit subjects of baptism, and that immersion is the only effectual or authorized mode of administering that sacrament."

About the time the Mason and Dixon line between Pennsylvania and Maryland was established a sharp line of demarcation between churchmen and "dissenters" was also being drawn in Virginia.

CHAPTER IV

1766

OUTRAGEOUS PERSECUTION IN STAFFORD COUNTY

The first case of actual imprisonment of a Baptist minister in the State of Virginia, for preaching the Gospel, of which we now have any authentic account, occurred in the County of Spotsylvania in the year 1768, when Lewis Craig and four others were arrested, tried and confined in the Fredericksburg jail. Prior to that date, however, there were other forms of persecution, but the actual incarceration of these men of God seems to have commenced at that time.

LEWIS CRAIG

Indicted and Tried But Not Imprisoned

While the year 1768 is the year the imprisonments started there is an item of contemporary literature which would seem to indicate that Lewis Craig was hailed before the grand jury of Spotsylvania County and tried on a previous occasion, the exact date of which has not been preserved.

And now a new and arresting character — John Waller — appears for the first time, and in two opposing roles. In the first he is a member of the grand jury that indicted Lewis Craig, and in the second he and Lewis Craig are members of the group of five brethren imprisoned for preaching the gospel. The first occurrence was evidently prior to the 1768 imprisonment, for Elder James Fife (a contemporary of some of the victims of that period), said in a speech delivered before the semi-centennial of the General Association of Virginia, in 1873, that when John Waller was awakened to a sense of his guilt he “continued for eight months in the most distressing state of mind * * * before he fled to Christ.” And in Semple’s *History*, pages 404 and 405 of the 1810 edition, we have a similar statement and also an account

of how John Waller was impressed at this first trial of Lewis Craig:

"He was one of the grand jury who presented L. Craig for preaching. This happily terminated in his good. Craig, in order to turn their mischievous intentions into something beneficial, watched the dismissal of the grand jury; and in order to gain their attention, more certainly, bought them a mug of grog. After he had gotten them together, he began:

"‘I thank you, gentlemen of the grandjury, for the honour you have done me. While I was wicked and injurious, you took no notice of me; but since I have altered my course of life, and endeavored to reform my neighbors, you concern yourselves much about me. I have gotten this mug of grog, to treat you with; and shall take the spoiling of my goods joyfully.’

"When Mr. W. heard him speak in this manner, and observed the meekness of his spirit, he was convinced that Craig was possessed of something that he had never seen in man before. He thought within himself, that he should be happy if he could be of the same religion with Mr. Craig. From this time, he began to attend their meetings. He was found of the Holy Spirit. The commandment came and he died. He saw and felt himself a sinner. He now, for the first time, except in blaspheming, began to call upon the name of the Lord. His convictions were deep and pungent. He ate no pleasant bread and drank no pleasant water, for seven or eight months, during which time he was almost in despair."

* * * * *

"By the time Messrs, Harriss and Read came on their next tour, he felt sufficiently confident to become a candidate for baptism; and going up into Orange county, was there baptized by Mr. Read, some time in the year 1767."

Whether John Waller's baptism took place in the neighborhood of Mountain-run or of Blue Run church this author has been unable to learn. Blue Run was in the vicinity of Orange court-house and was organized in 1766, when Elders Harriss and Read labored so effectively in that region. Time must be allowed for Mr. Waller to "attend their meetings," to become awakened to his

sense of guilt, and then to remain in that unpleasant state for seven or eight months before he was "sufficiently confident to become a candidate for baptism" in 1767. So, in all probability Lewis Craig's first arraignment in Spotsylvania occurred as early as the year 1766. While aware of the statement made by historians that Lewis Craig was not baptized until "1767," we are also told that *before* he was baptized he was in the habit of "following the preacher from place to place" and "would sometimes break out in solemn exhortation to others, while he confessed that he was himself without hope."

John Taylor's *A History of Ten Baptist Churches*, page 278, gives other details about Mr. Craig's conversion, etc.:

"Mr. Craig became awakened, perhaps as early as 1765, by the preaching of Col. Samuel Harris. * * * His ministry began before himself had hope of conversion, and after relief came to him, he went on preaching a considerable time before he was baptized, no administrator being near, many being converted under his labours; when he was baptized, a church was constituted at once, in Spotsylvania, Virginia, and Mr. Craig soon ordained as their pastor. His great zeal, in preaching far and near, soon drew the attention of magistrates, who were bound to keep good order. Mr. Craig was presented to the grand jury, for keeping unlawful conventicles and worshipping God contrary to the law of the land. A true bill was found against him, but perhaps with the indulgence of another hearing. (The jury having withdrawn to a tavern for refreshment.) Mr. Craig attended, called for a large bowl of rich toddy, and politely invited them to partake of his treat when a number of them pleasantly accepted (for Mr. Craig was truly a respectable man), when he accosted them thus, gentlemen I thank you, for your attention to me, when I was about this court yard, in all kind of vanity, folly and vice, you took no notice of me; but when I have forsaken all these vices, and warn men to forsake and repent of their sins, you bring me to the bar as a transgressor, or how is all this! The great solemnity of this address filled the hearers with dismay, and Mr. John Waller, one of the jurors, a very wicked man, became so struck, that he never got rest, till he found it in the Lord, and became one of the most successful preachers that was ever in Virginia, and was often times honoured with a prison for his preaching."

Thus far there is no other evidence to prove our contention that Lewis Craig was arraigned before the grand jury perhaps as early as 1766, except this account about John Waller, but this it seems is sufficiently explicit to prove it.

This "mug of grog," or "large bowl of rich toddy," may be looked upon as a dead fly in the "ointment of the apothecary," and spoil an otherwise beautiful story. And it was evidently for fear some good soul might be offended by this act of seeming indiscretion on the part of a minister of the gospel that Dr. Semple has added an explanatory note at the bottom of page 404, of his history, which is as follows:

"Mr. Craig was remarkably pious and zealous; availing himself of every opportunity to inculcate the gospel of Christ. He knew the grog was the most certain way to command the attention of the grandjury, to whom he desired to offer a lecture. 'Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves'."

Times have changed since then when most men, even ministers, took their grog or toddy regularly, and the man who *did not* was an exception to the general rule.

But quenching thirst and satisfying hunger has been from time immemorial a most excellent way of heaping coals of fire on an enemy's head. It was effectual in John Waller's case, and here is another instance where it proved most beneficial:

"During the persecuting times of England, two persons from Bedford went early one morning to the house of a pious man, who rented a farm in the parish of Keysee, with the intention of apprehending and imprisoning him in Bedford jail for non-conformity. The good man knew their intention, and desired his wife to prepare breakfast, at the same time kindly inviting his visitors to partake with them. In asking a blessing or in returning thanks for the food, he pronounced emphatically these words, — 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink,'—by which means the hearts of his persecutors were so softened that they went away without taking him into custody." (John Whitecross's *Anecdotes*, Vol. II, p. 107.)

In a previous chapter it was seen that as early as 1765 Elder Samuel Harriss visited Culpeper County with one of the inhab-

itants (a consecrated layman by the name of Allen Wyley), and tried to preach; but meeting with such violent opposition, "he went that night, over to Orange county, and preached with much effect. He continued many days preaching from place to place, attended by great crowds, and followed throughout his meetings by several persons who had been either lately converted, or seriously awakened, under the ministry of Regular Baptists, and also by many who had been alarmed by his own labours. When Mr. Harris left them, he exhorted them to be steadfast, and advised some in whom he discovered talents, to commence the exercise of their gifts, and to hold meetings among themselves. In this ministerial journey, Mr. Harris sowed much seed, which yielded afterwards great increase. The young converts took his advice, and began to hold meetings every Sabbath, and almost every night in the week, taking a tobacco-house for their meeting-house. After proceeding in this way for some time, they applied to Mr. David Thomas, who lived somewhere north of the Rappahannock, to come and preach for them, and teach them the ways of God more perfectly; he came, but in his preaching expressed some disapprobation of the preaching of such weak and illiterate persons. This was like throwing cold water upon their flaming zeal; they took umbrage, and resolved to send once more for Mr. Harris. Sometime in the year 1766, and a short time after Mr. Thomas's preaching, three of the party, viz.: Elijah Craig and two others, travelled to Mr. Harris's house, in order to procure his services in Orange and the adjacent parts, to preach and baptize the new converts. They found, to their surprise, that he had not been ordained to the administration of the ordinances. To remedy this inconvenience, he carried them about 60 miles into North-Carolina to get James Read, who was ordained." (*Benedict's History* (1813), Vol. II, pp. 44, 45.)

Mr. Reed agreed to go, and preaching along the way they arrived in Orange in about two weeks' time. When they came within the bounds of "Blue Run church," situated about midway between Barboursville and Liberty Mills, and "saw a very large congregation, they were greatly affected. After a few minutes of prayer and reflection, they recovered their courage, and entered upon their great work. They preached with much effect on that

day. The next day they preached at Elijah Craig's, where a vast crowd attended. David Thomas and John Gerrard, both preachers of the Regular Order, were at this meeting." (Benedict's *History* (1813), Vol. II, p. 45.)

This is the manner in which the Baptist message was first carried into Orange County. It is a pleasing picture full of life and color. They do not seem to have been disturbed at first, but it was not long before persecution began. In Benedict's *History* (1813), Vol. II, pages 336-337, he says:

SAMUEL HARRISS

*Pulled Down in Orange and Hauled About by a Hand,
a Leg, or the Hair of His Head*

"In Orange county, one Benjamin Healy pulled Mr. Harris down from the place where he was preaching and hauled him about, sometimes by the hand, sometimes by the leg, and sometimes by the hair of the head; but the persecuted preacher had friends here also, who espoused his part, and rescued him from the rage of his enemies. This, as in a former case, brought on a contention between his advocates and opposers; during which a Capt. Jameson sent Mr. Harris to a house where was a loft with a step-ladder to ascend it; into the loft he hurried him, took away the step-ladder, and left the good man secure from his enemies."

It is said of Elder David Thomas that he was much opposed when he first visited Culpeper County and preached in Allen Wyley's home, but "he went into the county of Orange, and preached several times and to much purpose. His labours were blessed. Having however, urgent calls to preach in various other places, and being much opposed and persecuted here, he did not attend here as often as was wished." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 293.)

CHAPPAWAMSICK

Constituted November 22, 1766

Perhaps one of the "urgent calls" that came to David Thomas was from Stafford County. According to Semple's *History* (1810), pp. 311, 312:

“When Mr. Thomas first began to preach in these parts (Chappawamsick church), he met with violent opposition. Public worship was sometimes prevented by the enemies of religion. To please God is to offend the devil. Satan felt his throne shake, and was determined to prop it with the pillars of darkness. Persecution, scoffs, reproaches, false reports, &c. were tried; but all in vain. They fell before the gospel, as the walls of Jericho fell before the blowing of the ram’s horns. Mr. Thomas sowed the first seed; which were watered by his ministerial sons William and Daniel Fristoe, and in a few years, by Mr. Moore also. So rapidly did the word increase among them, that in 1770, three years after the constitution, they had one hundred and seventy-six members. And the following year, after dismissing thirty-six members to form the Potomac church, they had remaining two hundred and twelve. The next year dismissing ninety-seven at once, to form Brent Town church, they were reduced to 116. From this period, Chappawamsick gradually declined for many years.”

David Thomas was perhaps the most learned Baptist preacher in Virginia at that time. He “drew the attention of the people for many miles around. They traveled in many instances fifty or sixty miles to hear him. It is remarkable that about the time of the first rise of the Gospel in Virginia there were multiplied instances of persons who had never heard anything like evangelical preaching that were brought through divine grace to see and feel the want of vital goodness. Many of these, when they would hear of Mr. Thomas and other Baptist preachers, would travel off to hear them and invite them to come and preach in their neighborhood.” By this means the Gospel was carried into many counties, as David Thomas did not confine himself to any one locality. Also in his labors he did not always encounter fair weather as the two following incidents preserved by Morgan Edwards’s *Volumes*, page 6, will show :

DAVID THOMAS

*Dragged Out in the Midst of Clinching Fists and
the Gnashing of Teeth*

“At another time one capt. Ball pulled Mr. Thomas down as he was preaching in a Tobacco house dragging him by the hand out of the place; as he pressed through the crowd

one would clench his fist and gnash his teeth at him; a second would do the same; and a third, in so much that Mr. Thomas's friends feared that he would have been pounded to pieces by the mob."

DAVID THOMAS

*Attempt Made to Shoot Him, But the Gun Was Wrenched
Out of the Man's Hands. Battle Followed and
Many Were Hurt.*

"At another time an outrageous fellow with a gun in his hand made towards him; but as he presented it to shoot Thomas a stander-by wrenched the gun from him; upon which a battle followed wherein many were hurt. The slanders and revilings he met with are innumerable; and if we may judge a man's prevalency against the devil by the rages of the devil's children Thomas has prevailed as a prince.

"As he was preaching in one place a parcel of Virginia bucks (of whom it has been said that, They have not wit enough to sin in a genteel manner), drew near to disturb the service with the following conversation:

"That is he, (quoth one).

"Yeas, (said a second) it is he that stole my neighbor Johnson's bull.

"Did he eat it, (said a third).

"No," (replied a fourth) for I saw him ride the bull about the country to preach.

"Yeas, (added a fifth), "and I saw him ride the bull last night to Moll Heerley's bawdy-house."

Here followed a great horse-laugh with the ensuing epilogue.

"I have heard that the king of Moroco, is the devil's bull-rider, but how the de—l came he to employ Old Thomas in bull-riding and preaching?"

After this they departed.

Trudging along not knowing what they sought,
And whistling as they went for want of thought."

David Thomas was one of the early preachers to visit Culpeper County after Samuel Harriss had advised the young converts to exercise their gifts. We are told they began to hold their meetings

in a tobacco house. As the first incident mentioned by Mr. Edwards occurred at a "Tobacco house," perhaps it was in Culpeper that they dragged him out by the hand and gnashed upon him with their teeth.

The Chappawamsick church was constituted, as we have seen, on November 22, 1766, in Overwharton Parish, Stafford County, and the following testimony from William Fristoe in his history, page 9, shows that the church, though persecuted, prospered:

"The church was gathered chiefly by the instrumentality of Elder David Thomas. Violent opposition to the preaching of the gospel appeared here and worship sometimes prevented by the enemies of the same; but notwithstanding the opposition, the Lord God Omnipotent reigned, and the work of God prospered, so that in a little while a church was constituted, containing a considerable number of members, who joined the Association August 17, 1767. The church proved a fruitful vine—out of her arose Elders William Fristoe, Daniel Fristoe, Jeremiah Moore, and William Grinstead."

According to Morgan Edwards's manuscript *Notes*, page 34, the Chappawamsick church had its beginning almost a year before joining the Association, viz.: "November 22, 1766." It was composed of eighty-one persons who were formerly members of Broad-run church, in Fauquier County, and Edwards's *Notes* testify that there was "great opposition" to *this* church also.

William Fristoe's *History of the Ketocton Association*, was written largely from memory, on page 80 of which he gives the following instance of persecution as the *first* in this neighborhood:

THREE OLD MEN

Indicted and Tried, But Not Imprisoned

"The first that we know of among us, taken by a warrant, was three old men, who had been hearing the gospel, and become sensible their former conduct had been wicked, and that there was a necessity for a reformation; the conclusion with them was, that they would not loiter away the sabbath as they had used to do, but meet together and endeavor to worship God; accordingly they met together, and in their feeble way, one of them read a sermon, and another went to

prayer; after which they returned home; soon after, they, by the power of a justice, was ordered to appear before him, or some other justice of the peace, to answer for their conduct as touching a late meeting, &c. When they were brought to trial, it was before the parson of the parish who was acting magistrate in the county, enquiry was made as touching the meeting: nothing appeared more than they peaceably met together, one of them had read a sermon, and another had endeavored to make prayer, without noise, multitude or tumult, and then separated from each other: at which information the parson tore up the warrant, and discharged them, with giving a short caution, not to be righteous over much."

Mr. Fristoe in speaking of the opposition to the Baptists, or the New Lights, as they were called at that time, says that the chief objection to them was at first this:

"The preachers were deemed false prophets, a set of wolves in sheep's clothing."

In other words they began to persecute them on the ground that the Baptists taught false and pernicious doctrines. To these accusations the Baptists "readily replied that if they were wolves in sheep's clothing, and their opponents were the true sheep, it was quite unaccountable that they were persecuted and cast into prison. It was well known that wolves would destroy sheep, but never, until then, that sheep would prey upon wolves." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 21.)

On pages 70 and 71 of his history Mr. Fristoe gives the following personal experience to prove that at first it was not that a man *preached*, but *what* he preached that was the all-important question:

WILLIAM FRISTOE

*Application Made for a Warrant to Apprehend the
Preacher for Preaching, But Refused*

"We will give a relation of a circumstance to the point, and as it was a case respecting the author, it is well known to him: Being in the county in which he lived, application was made by an individual to the leading character in the county for a warrant to apprehend the preacher for preaching: the magistrate to whom application was made, had been trained

to the law and possessed an understanding above most people; the enquiry by him was, what had been preached? that he knew of no law in force among us that would punish a man for simply preaching, and as for dissenters, the law was silent about them as a religious sect; that if he should issue a warrant and the preacher be apprehended, unless it could be proven that he preached something blasphemous, in which case he would be liable to punishment; but if that could not be proven, he would be exonerated, and therefore to no purpose to apprehend such an one; fortunate for the preacher that there was for once a man of sense bearing the civil sword, whose prejudice was no preventative to the exercise of a sound judgment."

Finding it not only difficult to catch a preacher, but more difficult to prove him guilty of preaching blasphemous doctrines, the authorities were compelled to change their tactics by accusing the Baptists of disturbing the peace with their unlawful assemblies. And not only were the civil powers active in this matter, but the rough element in numerous communities took upon themselves the pleasant task of dispersing the dissenting congregations. This opposition, though most frequently aimed at the preacher, as the instigator and chief promoter of the religious disturbance in a community, was not always confined to him. He may have been the "scape-goat" in most instances, but the various congregations which assembled to hear the gospel preached frequently had to bear their share of the blame and blows. At Chappawamsick, and elsewhere, our Baptist people never knew when they assembled for worship, whether they would be permitted to proceed with it in a peaceable and orderly manner, or have it rudely and barbarously broken up. Elder Fristoe may have been speaking of himself, or his brother Elder Daniel Fristoe, when he related, on page 76 of his *History* the following incidents of persecution by individuals and lawless mobs:

*Meeting Prevented by Large Mob Provided with Clubs
and Implants of Mischief*

"Sometimes attempts have been made by an individual man to take the preacher from the stand, in time of his publicly preaching the gospel, for no other pretended cause than the persecutor's wife made some pretensions to religion,

and that it was necessary we should be new creatures in order to happiness in a future world. This individual was repulsed in the attempt, and the mischief prevented.

"At the same meeting house, at another time, it has not been confined to an individual opposer; but large mobs have repaired to the meeting house, and that of the more brave and lusty, provided with clubs and impliments of mischief, and clearly manifested their design was to beat the preacher, and clear the place of the professors of religion; but as a preventative to their designs that day, the minister was informed of their collecting at the meeting house, before he reached the place, and it was thought most prudent both by himself and others to retire; by which means the preacher came off unhurt; the mob disappointed returned home much exasperated, but it was matter of lamentation that the gospel should be stopped in its administration, and divine worship prevented."

To be forewarned is forearmed, but the Chappawamsick church was not always so fortunate. Morgan Edwards gives in his *Notes*, on page 35, another account of an interruption to which they were forced to submit, and the awful consequences which befell the leader of the opposing, or persecuting forces:

*Robert Ashby and 40 Men Combined to Break up a Meeting.
Ashby Was Thrown Out Bodily and a Bloody
Fray Followed.*

"Remarkables (1) Great opposition, upwards of 40 combined to break them up, but the leader (Rob. Ashby) was thrown out of the door which ended a battle; this Ashby soon after cut his knee which festered and at last opened the joint that the leg hung by the ham-strings; he would not be touched in his bed till at last he died in his own excrement, & tho' he desired preaching he began to stop his ears and desired the preacher to desist for he could not bear it."

In his *Volumes*, page 8, Mr. Edwards gives other details about this same incident:

"One Robert Ashby and his gang (consisting of about 40) had combined together to knip them in the bud. Once they came to harrass at their worship and entered the house

like bears; but some stout fellows (not able to gear the insult) took Ashby by the neck and heels and threw him out of the door; his gang took his part which involved the whole multitude in a bloody fray."

Benedict's account adds the following:

"But Ashby dying, soon after, in a miserable manner, struck a damper on their mischievous designs, and procured quietness for a while to the poor sufferers, whom the civil powers left to the mercy, or rather to the rage and insolence of such infuriated banditti." (Benedict's *History* (1813), Vol. II, p. 21.)

Both Fristoe and Edwards have left on record an attempt upon the life of the preacher by the use of a gun:

"At another Time," says Fristoe's *History*, page 77, "at the same place, a gun has been brought by a person, in a great rage, and presented within the meeting house doors, supposed to shoot the preacher, but was prevented by his own brother, who suddenly caught the gun from him and prevented the execution of the wicked design."

*Charles Williams Held a Riot, Followed by a Battle
and Much Blood Shed*

Morgan Edwards' manuscript material was gathered within a few years after these incidents occurred, and frequently is much more explicit than Mr. Fristoe's *History*, which was written many years afterwards and largely from memory. Mr. Edwards even gives the names of the ring leaders of the various mobs that molested the Chappawamsick church. His version of the above affair is given on page 35 of his *Notes*, and is as follows:

"Another time Charles Williams held a riot, being re-proved ran home for his gun to shoot the minister but as he presented, one struck it out of his hand; he then fell to fight and gouge; which brought on a battle and much blood shed."

Also from Edwards and Benedict we learn of the incident of the live snake thrown on one occasion "into the midst," while Benedict gives the additional item of the hornet's nest at another time.

Morgan Edwards's *Notes*, page 35 :

"Another time some of the combes with a gang came and threw a live snake into the midst of them; but no harm done."

Benedict's *History*, Vol. II, page 21, adds the hornets :

"This infernal conspiracy continued to vent their rage against the Baptists, by throwing a live snake into the midst of them at one time, and a hornet's nest at another, while they were at worship; and at another time they brought fire-arms to disperse them."

Not once in their struggle for religious freedom did the Baptists return evil for evil, but Fristoe on page 78 of his *History* gives the following account of a futile attempt on their part to be protected from the lawless mob :

"At another time, at the same place, a few being met at the meeting house, to pray, sing praises and offer up their solemn devotion, and employ themselves in the most profitable manner; while at devotion, a mob have collected, they immediately rushed upon them in the meeting house, and began to inflict blows, on the worshipers, and produce bruises and blood-shed, so that the floor shone with the sprinkled blood the days following; upon which the few baptists in the place concluded they would aim at a redress of their grievances, by bringing the lawless mob to justice, and inflict punishment upon them according to just deserts. A warrant was applied for, and obtained, for the principal leaders of the mischief—they were apprehended, and time and place appointed for trial—things being thus circumstanced, hopes were entertained that for once the oppressed might have justice shewn them; but the reverse was soon manifest. On trial the disturbers of the peace could prove any thing, and every thing, they wanted to prove favorable to themselves—they could prove that the meeting people were as riotous as themselves, and the magistrates at the time (a few excepted) so filled with prejudice, that full credit was given to evidence against the baptists, and a refusal to hear any thing favorable to them—the result was, it was deemed a riot, and all were discharged."

All attempts hitherto to silence the Baptists and other dissenters having failed the authorities now decided to resort to another device—that no one could preach without a license from the General Court, which sat but twice a year at the Colonial Capital. Not only was the journey long but laborious and discouraging. Much preparation must be made before it began, and William Fristoe, in his *History of the Kettocton Association*, pages 71-76, gives a detailed account of what was necessary before a license to preach could be obtained:

“Time grew such there appeared no probability of escaping prison without a license could be obtained, and to obtain them was difficult for by this time the members of the general court had taken prejudice, being all of the established church, they resolved to discountenance the baptist, and decreed to license but one place in a county.

“It was vain to apply to the general court for a license, without going prepared in the following manner: a petition was drawn expressive of the desire of the people in the neighborhood where the meeting-house stood, or was to be built; this petition must be signed by twenty free persons, with the addition of two acting justices of the peace, certifying that the above signers were inhabitants of the place; and this was difficult at all times to obtain. A certain preacher drew a petition and obtained signers, and then made application to several magistrates in the county, and met with a stern refusal; one circumstance was favorable to him—there was at that time several that proposed themselves as candidates for the state legislature, and desired the suffrage of the freeholders, two of which gave him a certificate. Another hardship, when a license was obtained it was confined and limited, it was for a place and not a person, for the house and not the man, or in other words the man was allowed to preach at the licensed meeting-house, and there only, and had no more right to preach elsewhere than he had before he obtained a grant from the supreme court. I knew the general court to refuse a license for a baptist meeting house, in the county of Richmond, because there was a presbyterian meeting house already in the county—although the act of toleration considered them distinct societies.

“Under these circumstances it was both discouraging and mortifying; to attempt to offer a petition, when it was

known, if granted at all, it would be with great reluctance, all the chance we had as British subjects to plead the act of toleration, and that was intolerable, for one set of men to make application to another set of men (cap in hand) and in the most humble posture, ask their consent and allowance, to worship the God that made them, to publicly own the Lord Jesus that died for them; to talk and tell of his love; to inquire into, and inculcate the precious word of life, the gospel of salvation, to sing his solemn praise, and call on his name by prayer and supplication.

"Intolerable as this was necessity compelled us to comply, having no other alternative—and it was well understood that if license was denied, that preacher would be apprehended, imprisoned, and roughly handled in some way or other.

"We come now to present our petition to the honorable general court, at which tokens of disgust appeared in the countenance of the members of the court; every enquiry was made, and every measure adopted to evade granting the petition.

"If a license was granted for a certain place, the preacher who applied for the license had to pass an examination by a church clergyman before a license issued, the qualification in this case was, application must be made to a minister of the church of England, by the person licensed, and there give his consent to the thirty-nine articles of the above church, except three, and a part of the fourth, after such examination, and subscribing to the above articles, the church parson gave, from under his hand, certifying he had examined such an one, and that he had qualified according to law—this certificate was borne back to court, upon which a license issued from the Clerk's table.

"Here arose another difficulty in the case of examination—after the court had granted license to a certain preacher, application was made to several episcopalian preachers, then officiating in the college of William and Mary—the president or leading character was first addressed—and the request made that he should make the examination—the reply was, in an overbearing and disdainful manner, I will not, for I am head of the church here, and it is countenancing dissenters too much to afford them a hearing, or perform any offices for them. Application was made to the second—he appeared more timid, but said he had examined some dis-

senters before, and the other preachers had not, and as the leading character did not think proper to do it, he would not. The third was then sought to—he said he would not, for the other two had as much right to oblige the Baptists as he had, and as they would not perform the work of examination he would not. After which information was given of a preacher living on James River, a small distance from Williamsburg, and it was supposed he would oblige the preacher—upon which advice he was addressed, who in a friendly and courteous manner did the business. The articles were read and subscribed to according to law—a certificate was then given by the parson, by virtue of which a license was granted.

“It is easy for the reader to understand that thro’ the whole process of this business, from the beginning to the end, obstructions and difficulties lay in the way—first to get the signers to a petition, second to get a certificate from two magistrates in the county from which the petition was sent, thirdly to find the court in such a temper and capable of exercising such generosity as to grant a license, and after all this, it was left uncertain and precarious, and depending on the will and temper of the clergy whether we should succeed or not. Oh! how disagreeable our situation at that time, when, in combination the malice of the clergy, and the courts of justice were inflamed and raged to a degree of madness, while we were by the common herd spoken against every where; we are left to conclude that our existence in the world, our preservation as a religious society, and the scanty privilege we enjoyed, of the exercise of conscience in the discharge of the duties of religion, was entirely owing to the superintending providence of God, whose almighty power preserved this burning bush, and therefore it was not consumed.”

William Fristoe refers to the “three old men” as being the *first* that he knew of in their community to be “taken by a warrant,” and states that after being tried they were dismissed by the parson-magistrate with the admonition to “not be righteous over much.”

After mentioning this case Benedict’s *History*, Vol. II, page 33, states that:

“In two instances only, does it appear, that any person in these parts, was actually imprisoned on account of religion,

although they suffered much abuse and persecution from outrageous mobs and malicious individuals. The one, it seems, was a licensed exhorter, and was arrested for exhorting at a licensed meeting-house. The magistrate sent him to jail, where he was kept until court; but the court, upon knowing the circumstances, discharged him. The other was James Ireland, who was imprisoned in Culpeper jail, and in other respects treated very ill."

PHILIP SPILLER

Put in Jail. Duration of Imprisonment Unknown.

It will appear from the cases yet to be reported that there were many others besides James Ireland imprisoned "in these parts." But who was this "licensed exhorter," where did he exhort and in what jail was he imprisoned? Morgan Edwards's *Notes*, page 35, states that "Philip Spiller" was an exhorter of the "Chappawamsick church, in Stafford county," and was "taken with a warrant."

William Fristoe, who was not only a ministerial son of this church, but was for some time the pastor, declared it his fixed purpose, when writing his history, to give only the minute details of those cases where his personal knowledge extended, or concerning which he had received well authenticated reports. On pages 82 and 83 of his *History of the Ketoc-ton Association*, he gives this account of an exhorter without mentioning his name, and it is presumed that he is referring to the same person mentioned by Morgan Edwards and referred to by Benedict:

"A third persecution was a certain man whom the baptist church had allowed and encouraged as an exhorter, and was approved of as such; the same was engaged in a word of exhortation on sabbath day, at a licensed meeting house: soon after he began, he was arrested by a justice of the peace who had brought the sheriff with him; his commitment was soon wrote, and without further ceremony hurried by the officer, and soon committed to the care of the jailer, who shut him up in a disagreeable dungeon, where he remained until court for the county; at which time he was brought to the bar, and the charge exhibited. The king's attorney strove to render the prisoner ridiculous, his doctrine atrocious, and the sect to which he belonged enthus-

iasts, and injurious to the community; an attorney was employed on the side of the prisoner, who managed the cause to advantage; here another opportunity offered for information that there was no law provided for the apprehending and imprisoning dissenters for simply preaching, and that the doing of it was arbitrary and tyrannical; the result of the trial was, the person was discharged, for the following reasons: first, that he was allowed by the baptist church to exhort, and secondly, he was exercising his gift in a licensed meeting house; the court could not devise how they might detain the prisoner longer—he was therefore discharged."

ALDERSON WEEKS

Arrested on a Warrant, but Not Imprisoned

In speaking of the Chappawamsick church Morgan Edwards has this comment in his *Volumes*, page 7:

"The ministers are Rev. mess. D. Thomas and Daniel Fristoe who have to their assistants mess Phillip Spiller and Alderson Weeks; the last has been taken on a warrant for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus but not imprisoned."

In the same *Volumes*, page 8, this further comment is made about the situation at Chappawamsick which shows that "others" besides these two exhorters were arrested:

"The civil powers also threatened them and issued warrants against some, particularly mess. Spiller, Weeks and others: but having obtained help of God they continue to this day."

Alderson Weeks was at one time the pastor of the North Fork church, in the Ketoc-ton Association, and it is said by Dr. Semple's *History* (1810), page 307, to have been "a preacher of acceptance and usefulness." And in a footnote on the same page, he states:

"Mr. Weeks, the first pastor of this church, moved to Bedford, and there has the care of a church. We presume it is the same man."

The History of the Ketockton Association, from which we have quoted freely in the fore-going pages about the Chappawamsick church, was published by William Fristoe in 1809, nineteen years before his death.

"Mr. Fristoe lived to a good old age. He died after a short illness at his own residence in Shenandoah County, on the 14th of August, 1828, having reached his eighty-sixth year. He had been for more than sixty years a defender of the truth, and one of the pillars of the church in the upper country." (Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), Series I, p. 78.)

We have given all these cases of persecution, and the one instance of imprisonment, that of the "exhorter," in connection with the Chappawamsick church, and without dates. They may have covered a period of years in the early history of that section and some of the incidents may have happened at other churches. It is unfortunate that Mr. Fristoe did not keep a journal, and a lamentable fact that he did not give names and dates in his history. How helpful they would have been today!

Elder Fristoe is supposed to have been buried at his home place in Shenandoah County, and should the spot be definitely ascertained Virginia Baptists ought by all means to mark it with a monument since he deserves well at their hands.

CHAPTER V

CATHOLIC TOLERATION *vs.* BAPTIST PERSECUTION

Eighty years before the Baptists were so bitterly persecuted in Stafford and the adjoining counties, James II, King of England, had granted the Catholics in that same section "religious tolerance." They had petitioned His Majesty for the free exercise of their religion and took particular pains to mention the fact that they "had projected and do speedily designe to build a Towne with convenient fortifications." The proposed "fortifications" may have had something to do with the King condescending to grant "their humble request," as they would in their new location act as a barrier against the Indian raids and massacres, which were so much dreaded at that time. At any rate the King issued the Proclamation, an account of which may be found in *The Virginia Historical Magazine*, July, 1909, pages 309 and 310:

"On February 10th, 1686-7, a proclamation issued by King James II authorizes the purchasers of the said tract to freely exercise their religion. Presumably all of them were Roman Catholics. A copy of this proclamation is here reproduced. It will be noticed that the privilege as to the exercise of their religion is granted not only to the individuals named, but to all the inhabitants of the town or tract mentioned.

"Copy from the original formerly in the possession of the late J. C. Brent, Washington, D. C.

Copia: (Signed) James R.

"Right trusty and well beloved, Wee greet you well. Whereas our Trusty and well beloved George Brent of Woodstock, in our County of Stafford in that our Collony of Virginia, Richard Foote and Robert Bristow of London, Merchants & Nicholas Hayword of London, Notary Publick have by their humble Petition informed us that they have purchased of our right trusty and well beloved Thomas Lord Culpeper a certain tract of land in our said Colony between the Rivers of Rappahannock and Potomac containing of estimation Thirty thousand acres lying in or near our said County of Stafford some miles distant from any present settlement, or Inhabitants and at or about Twenty Miles

from the foot of the mountains, upon part of which Tract of Land the Pet'rs have projected and do speedly designe to build a Towne with convenient fortifications, and doo therefore pray that for the encouragement of Inhabitants to settle in the said Towne and plantation wee would be pleased to grant them the free exercise of their Religion, wee have thought fitt to condescend to their humble request and wee do accordingly give and grant unto the Pet'rs and to all and every the Inhabitants which now are or hereafter shall bee settled in the said Towne and Tract of Land belonging to them as is above mentioned, the free exercise of their Religion without being prosecuted or molested upon any penall laws or other account for the same, which wee do hereby signifie unto you to the end you make take care and give such orders as may be requisite. That they enjoy the full benefit of these our gracious intention to them.

"Provided they behave themselves in all civill matters so as to become peaceable and Loyall subjects, and for so doing this shall your warrant and so wee bid you heartily farewell.

"Given att our Court at Whitehall the 10th day of Feb'ry 1686-7, in the third year of our Reign.

By his Maj'ties Commands

Sunderland

"Directed to our Right Trusty and well beloved Francis Lord Howard of Effingham our Lieutenant & Givernor Generall of our Collony & Dominions of Virginia in America and to our Chiefe Governor or Governors there for the time being

The place of	This shall
the	oblige
Royal Signet	Francis

Locum
Sigilli

This is a true copy of the original to me shown and produced—Examined in London this 19th day of February Anno Domini 1686.

Quod attesto Marue ac sigillo rogatus.
Sam'l Scorey, Not. Pub'k."

Because of this proclamation the Catholics enjoyed the “free exercise of their religion” while the Baptists never knew when they assembled for worship whether they would be permitted to proceed in a peaceable manner, or have their service barbarously broken up, without any protection from the civil authorities. And yet there is no evidence that the Baptists conducted themselves in any way except as “peaceable and Loyall subjects.” They too “behaved themselves in all civill matters” and only asked that they might worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences and not be compelled to conform to a religion not of their own choosing.

We have already seen that Governor Gooch favored the Presbyterians on several occasions, and even told the delegation that waited on him from Hanover County, that “they were not only tolerated but acknowledged as a part of the established church of the realm.”

CHAPTER VI

1767

THE "NEW BIRTH" PREACHED AND EMPHASIZED

From the foregoing incidents in connection with the rise of the Baptists in Stafford County, it will be observed that the civil powers as well as the lawless mobs were involved in the persecution of the Baptists. It is greatly to be deplored that all the court records of that early period have been destroyed and it is therefore impossible to verify the statements made by historians with reference to Stafford County, as we have tried to do in the case of other counties. Presumably the citizens of Stafford County were much like those in other parts of the State, as described by Benedict's *History*, Vol. II, page 653:

"The first appearance of the denomination in the country excited no alarm; most of their converts were from a class of people who were of but small account in society: their preachers were generally illiterate: their assemblies and their efforts in places remote and obscure, and the language of the leading men in the church and State was, let them alone, they will soon fall out among themselves and come to nothing. In some places the maxim was adhered to, and persecution in a legal shape was never known. But in many others, alarmed by their rapid increase, the men of power, especially those in the lowest functions, strained every penal law in the Virginia code to obtain ways and means to put down the disturbers of the peace, as they were now called."

ORANGE COUNTY

County Seat—Orange

David Thomas was the first Baptist preacher to carry the gospel into Orange County. This occurred in 1763. Then came Samuel Harriss in 1765. James Read became an early co-laborer with Samuel Harriss, and by the labors of these three many converts were made, among whom were Lewis Craig, Elijah Craig, Nathaniel Saunders and Lewis Conner.

"When Mr. Harris left them he exhorted them to be steadfast and advised some in whom he discovered talents, to commence the exercise of their gifts, and to hold meetings among themselves. * * * The young converts took his advice, and began to hold meetings every Sabbath, and almost every night in the week, taking a tobacco house for the meeting house." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 8.)

MOUNTAIN RUN

*An Arm of Broad Run
House Built in 1767*

It was but natural that they should desire a better meeting house in which to worship their new found Saviour, and there is a beautiful story of how these young converts succeeded in getting one. It is found in Taylor's biographical sketch of Elder Lewis Conner, on page 187, of the First Series (1860 Edition):

"Elder Conner at this time resided near the Raccoon Ford on the Orange side, and, soon after his baptism, began to exercise his gift publicly in singing, prayer, and exhortation. In these exercises he was associated with other young converts, particularly Lewis Craig.

"They had no meeting house, but held their meetings from house to house in the neighborhood. The spirit of the Lord, however, being strong in their hearts, their minds were soon drawn to the propriety of building a house of worship. Accordingly, Elder Conner and Lewis or Elijah Craig undertook and built a meeting-house of tolerable dimensions on the land of Uriel Mallory, on Mountain River, Orange County. Such was their zeal that, others perhaps finding nails, they erected and completed the building for the small sum of five pounds."

Without knowing the location of Uriel Mallory's land, and assuming that the Mountain-run church was the same one that was built by these enthusiastic young converts on "Mountain River," we conclude that Nathaniel Saunders was the pastor. Morgan Edwards so states and from him we also learn that the church was built in "1767" and that the building was "40 by 24" feet.

William Green's Lengthy Epistle to Nathaniel Saunders

A clash occurred very soon between Mr. Saunders' congregation and some members of the Established Church in Orange County. The exact nature of it can not now be stated with any degree of certainty, but there is a veiled intimation that it had something to do with the subject of Christian living. All we know about it is preserved in a letter, written by one, William Green, and directed to Elder Saunders. This letter, old and yellow with age, worn through at the creases where it was folded, and written on both sides of the paper in a very fine hand-writing, has been preserved, and is now the property of the *Virginia Baptist Historical Society*. It has been deciphered with difficulty and a copy of it is inserted here as evidence of the strained relationship that existed between the Establishment and the Baptists in Orange County at that time, 1767. The letter is written in a sweet-spirited, brotherly strain and merited a kind and fraternal reception and reply. There are so many Scriptural quotations in it that a condensed copy has been made omitting many passages when such could be done without destroying the sense. The letter was addressed to Elder Nathaniel Saunders, and is as follows:

"Feby 7th, 1767.

"Mr. Sanders

"The late disturbances which have happened between your congregation, and some of the Members of our Church, have given me the utmost uneasiness. And as I am told that some of your Sect were the Aggressors, by Abusing the Minister of this Parish, and uttering many indecent and scandalous Invectives & Reflections against the Church, and its members, I cannot forbear writing to you on the Occasion, and giving you my Thoughts, in general, concerning the Duty of a Christian. And this I intend to do, in a Friendly, and I hope, not Unchristian Manner. For I Apprehend, the Gospel of Christ, will justify no other than Mild and Gentle Arguments. And whoever proceeds further, however fond he may be of his own Opinions, and whether he be Churchman or Annabaptist, or by whatever Name, or title he may be called has not, I humbly conceive, a True Christian Spirit in him. By this I mean not to reflect on any Man. I have known many, who from a warm Temper; have suffered their

Zeal for Christianity to hurry them into Acts of Violence. But the fault not wilful. On the contrary, I believe they have thought themselves Right; when I have thought them evidently wrong. And I hope I shall be excused for giving my opinion freely. Our Love and Charity, ought to be Universal, since God alone, can determine, who are right, and who are wrong."

(The next paragraph is filled with eleven Scriptural quotations on the subject of "Love for one another," and closes with this remark: "Many other Places there are to this Purpose, which my Time will not permit me, at present, to Point out.")

"I cannot say that I am thoroughly acquainted with all your Doctrines and Tenets; but it seems to me that you do not look upon other Christians, as I would recommend it to you to consider, that Tender, Pathetick, and truly Christian Address of St. Paul's to the Corinthians (I Cor. 1:10, 11 & 12)." After quoting these verses, then he adds, "Here you see that the Apostle Speaks of four different Sects or Christians, and yet he calls them ALL *Brethren*.—And I will observe too, by the way, that it appears to me, from the four following verses of this chapter, the Contentions to which St. Paul alludes, were about Baptism. However, it seems there really were divisions among them; and therefore, we have little reason to wonder that the same thing should now happen. We see that St. Paul reviles them not; but meekly Beseeches them in the Name of the Lord Jesus.—Christ himself, when he was Reviled, Reviled not again." (Then he quotes two more verses from Ephesians, and gives the references for five others, on this subject.)

"With respect to Charity, we have many excellent Lessons. I Cor. xiii.—This whole Chapter is almost entirely taken up with the Praises of this Virtue; and at the Conclusion, it is made the first of Christian Graces. 'And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three, but the greatest of these is Charity.' I Pet. iv. 8.—Above all things have fervent Charity among yourselves; for Charity shall cover the multitude of Sins."—It is needless to mention a great Number of other Texts to the same Purpose.

"For my part, I think I could Live, in Love & Peace, with a good Man of any of the various Sects Christians; Nor do I perceive any necessity for differing or quarreling with

a Man, because he may not Think exactly as I do. I might as well quarrel with him for not being of the same Size or Complexion with my self. For the different Operations of the Mind are not to be accounted for. And as we have different Degrees of Understanding, we must, necessarily, have different Notions and Conceptions of Things. Indeed I have no doubt but the great Disposer of all things, has given us these different Notions for Good and Wise Ends; altho our present State may not allow us to discover what those Ends may be.—God is no Respector of Persons; therefore it is high Presumption and Folly, for us to pretend to confine God's Mercies to any particular Nation, or Sect.—Rom. ii, 10.11.” (This verse is quoted and then Acts x:35.)

“Allow me to add a few Observations concerning the freedom, with which I am told some of your Sect Judge and Condemn the Church, and I will take my leave.”

(Then he quotes eight passages of Scripture against judging one another and concludes by saying): “These Texts are sufficient to my Purpose, tho' there are many others of the same Import.—I shall therefore only mention one more, which I think a very remarkable one—When James & John would have obtained leave of our Lord to command Fire from Heaven to destroy the Samaritans, because they did not receive Him: ‘He turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy Men's Lives, but to Save them.’—See Luke ix. 51-56. This is a lesson full of Instruction; and every Morose, and Censorious, and Cruel Bigot, who will rightly consider it, must surely *Return from the Evil of his Ways*.

“Whenever I hear of a self-sufficient Man, who Judges and Condemns his fellow creatures without Mercy; and Appropriates the Mercies of God, and the Benefits resulting from Christ, to himself, and those of his Sect only, it brings to my Mind a passage in the book of Job, Chap. xv. ver. 8.9—‘Hast thou heard the Secret of God? and dost thou restrain Wisdom to thyself? What knowest thou that we know not? What understandest thou which is not in us?’

“I know not whether the Informations I have had, are true or not: But if they are, worse could not be said of the Pagans & Idolators, who sacrificed their Children to Moloch, than has been said by some of your Society, concerning the

Church and its Members; the Ministers not excepted. For my part, I think Men who will behave in such a Manner, cannot reasonably expect to be Treated with common decency or respect; nor can they have the least pretensions to Candour, Modesty, or good Manners: And whither they can have any Portion of the meek Spirit of Jesus, is only known to God.—The Truth is, I should not have wrote to You about this Matter, had I not had a good Opinion of your understanding; and had I not also heard, that your Behaviour has been much more Moderate than most of your Brethren. I am therefore in hopes you cannot but see the folly and inconsistency of those Men, and that you will admonish them. See Gal. vi. i. I sincerely wish well to all Mankind, and fain would persuade my Neighbours to Live in Peace, Brotherly Love, and Charity, one with another, *‘By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye Love one another.’*—I shall endeavor, in like manner, to persuade those of our Church, who have been over warm to forbear hereafter. And I doubt not but you might enjoy your Religion in Peace & Quietness, if you would forbear to concern yourselves with those who are of the Church; who are Christians as well as yourselves; I can at least say so of my self; and I have taken no small Pains to examine the Dispute.

“I heartily Pray that God would please to Enlighten us all, so as to See, & to Know, in what Manner our Service would be most Acceptable to him; and that we may all have Grace to Act according to the Light that may be given us.—Thus concludes

Your real Friend & Well-wisher,

(Signed) Wm. Green.”

Mr. Green pays a high tribute to Elder Saunders in this letter, when he tells why he addressed him:

“The Truth is, I should not have wrote to You about this matter, had I not had a good Opinion of your understanding; and had I not heard, that your Behaviour has been much more Moderate than most of your Brethren.”

But who was this Mr. William Green? There was a William Green, who was one of His Majesty’s Justices in Culpeper County at this time, and so prominent was he that he is almost always

the first justice to be mentioned in the lists found among the "Colonial Papers," in the Archives Department of the State Library, but it does not appear whether he was the William Green who wrote this letter.

While this "Dispute" may have had something to do with Christian living, yet there were other important questions that were being discussed in that early day.

The New Birth

Dr. Archibald Alexander, of Princeton, one of the most gifted and honored ministers of the Presbyterian church, has preserved an illuminating glimpse into the state of society in the adjoining county, when he was a young man in his teens. He writes freely about the idea that prevailed then with reference to the "New Birth," and proves conclusively that it was a source of much conversation and of no little perplexity. It seems to have been at that time a subject as utterly new to the inhabitants in those counties as it was to Nicodemus, when Christ first mentioned it to him. Dr. Alexander gives his own idea of what constituted religion in the following statement: "My only notion of religion was that it consisted in becoming better. I had never heard of any conversion among the Presbyterians." Then he tells how, when he was seventeen years old, he left his father's house in Rockbridge County, near Lexington, and journeyed forth across the Blue Ridge mountains, a distance of one hundred and forty miles, "to become a private tutor in the family of General John Posey, of the Wilderness, in the county of Spotsylvania." Then he gives this intimate picture of General Posey's home:

"In the house of General Posey, an aged Christian lady, Mrs. Tyler, had found a refuge. She was a Baptist, and was well bred and well informed, having seen better days. In the embarrassing circumstances of the young family tutor, Providence raised him up an invaluable friend in this excellent woman. She corrected his opinions and guided him in the choice of useful books. Sometimes she related her own religious experience. In early life she had been gay and fond of admiration. The only form of Christianity with which she was then acquainted was that of the English Establishment. When the Baptists first began to preach in the

country she held them in contempt, and used to go to their meetings purposely to ridicule the blunders of their ministers. But under a discourse from an aged stranger, she found her peace of mind effectually destroyed. In her deep and continued distress she was without any adviser, and knew not whither to look for direction and relief. At length she came deliberately to the conclusion that she should certainly be lost. Her efforts were vain, and she sank into a calm despair. But she remembered to have heard that the souls in perdition blaspheme God in their anguish. This she felt that she could never do. She should for ever bless God for his goodness. Thinking thus, she found the plan of salvation by Christ opened to her view, and, filled with admiration, she owned herself willing to take the cross and follow Christ. Nor was the self-denial small to which she was called. The Baptists, under whose ministry she was awakened, were a despised people in Virginia. Yet she joined them, in the face of remonstrance and contempt from all her connections. Such was the narrative which she gave, adding as she turned to the inexperienced young man, 'Now I know all this must appear utter nonsense to you, who have felt nothing of the kind.' He was silent, but was deeply convinced, from the solemnity of her manner, that there must be a reality in these things.

* * * * *

"About this time General Posey had a mill built on his plantation, and the millwright was a Baptist by the name of Waller, a brother, I think, of a famous Baptist preacher called Jack Waller. I often talked with this man about his business and other matters; but one day he unexpectedly turned to me and asked me whether I believed that before a man could enter the kingdom of heaven he must be born again. I knew not what to say, for I had for some time been puzzled about the new birth. However, I answered in the affirmative. He then asked whether I had experienced the new birth. I hesitated, and said, 'Not that I knew of.' 'Ah,' said he, 'if you had ever experienced this change you would know something about it!' Here the conversation ended; but it led me to think more seriously whether there were any such change. It seemed to be in the Bible; but I thought there must be some method of explaining it away; for among the Presbyterians I had never heard of any one who had experi-

enced the new birth, nor could I recollect ever to have heard it mentioned. This became about the same time a subject of discussion at the table, after old Mrs. Tyler had withdrawn, especially on Sunday. In these conversations Mrs. Posey, who professed to be a 'seeker,' defended the Baptist opinions, and so did old Mrs. William Jones, who I believe was a truly pious woman. General Posey declared that he did not believe in any such miraculous change, but added that he would credit it, if Mrs. Posey should ever profess that she experienced it. Mr. William Jones was a good-natured, luxurious, skeptical man, who avoided giving offence by any avowal of his opinions, but plainly insinuated that religion was a disease of weak and superstitious minds, and that all that was necessary for a cure was an acquaintance with philosophy. Major Jones cared for none of these things. His opinion was that preaching was as much a trade as any thing else." (From James W. Alexander's *The Life of Archibald Alexander, D.D.* (1854), pp. 32, 34-41.)

The doctrine of the "New Birth" was new in that early day in Virginia, but it was a subject our Baptist preachers loved to stress. John 3:3 was the text from which James Ireland preached his first sermon in Culpeper County. John Waller said that it was preached from the grated-windows of Spotsylvania and Middlesex jails, to those who came to hear the imprisoned preachers. The need of the "New Birth" as presented by John Waller so pierced the heart of Iverson Lewis that it brought him into the Baptist ranks. Nevertheless it was not a popular subject being at variance with the easy going ritualism and formality of the Establishment, that many people thought those who advocated it were either fanatics or crazy. Such preaching was an assault upon the religious customs of that day and could not be tolerated, no matter by whom preached.

Even as late as 1772 the question of the "New Birth" was, in some quarters in Virginia little known and of course never discussed. Richard Dozier, who was perhaps the first convert in Westmoreland County to the Baptist faith, kept a note-book* in which he jotted down the names of various ministers he heard and the texts upon which they based their discourses. He heard

*A copy of this note-book is in the collection of the *Virginia Baptist Historical Society*, at the University of Richmond, Virginia.

William Fristoe preach at Zacariah Whites, on August 23, 1772, from Deuteronomy 1:6, and makes this significant comment:

“At this time there was scarce a person heard to talk about the new birth in this place.”

LOUDON COUNTY

County Seat—Leesburg

NEW VALLEY

Constituted July 18, 1767

In the same year in which the building was erected by Lewis Conner and his helpers, Nathaniel Saunders, Lewis Craig, Elijah Craig and perhaps others, another church was organized in Loudon County by the name of New Valley. It was formed “partly by emigrants from Pennsylvania and partly by converts in Virginia. Their first pastor moved from the Great Valley in Pennsylvania, and, settling here, took care of the church. He was not much distinguished, and the church seems to have trodden in his steps as to her religious prosperity.” (Semple’s *History* (1810) page 306.)

Morgan Edwards states that this church was constituted out of eight members, that the date of their incorporation was “Jul. 18, 1767,” and that there were “no remarkables” connected with it. Beale’s *Semple* (1894), mentions their pastor as being a leader in the old-school, or anti-mission Baptists in 1823-’34, and that the church followed him.

SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY

County Seat—Spotsylvania

The scene now shifts some fifty miles southward to Spotsylvania County where another church was constituted.

UPPER SPOTSYLVANIA

Constituted November 20, 1767

On the above date twenty-five persons were constituted into a church, by Elders James Read and Dutton Lane, and because of its location was called Upper Spotsylvania. It consisted of two

branches; the meeting house of one 40 x 24 feet, built in 1760 on land donated by Lewis Craig was located twenty-two miles southwest of Fredericksburg and four miles from what is now Parker's Station, on the Fredericksburg and Orange Court-house railroad. The other station was near Fredericksburg, where there was a meeting house, but where we are not told. In November 1770, or three years after its constitution, the church received Lewis Craig as pastor, and began to be known as "Craig's" and so continues until this day (1934). "In 1776 the Word of God grew mightily among them, and one hundred were added. But in 1791, to the great mortification of the remaining members, Mr. Craig, with most of the church, moved to Kentucky." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 152.)

James Read who helped to found this church must have had his share of the persecution so prevalent in that day, but very few incidents have been handed down to posterity. *The Roanoke Religious Correspondent*, or *Monthly Visitant*, of July, 1823, gives on page 100 this instance which this servant of God had to endure for the Truth's sake:

JAMES READ

Kicked and Cuffed About

"Elder James Reed was once, while he was preaching, dragged off the stage, and then kicked and cuffed, and pushed some distance to a fence; where his enemies left him; he then returned and finished his discourse."

James Read and Samuel Harriss continued their ministerial visits annually for about three years; each visit consuming several weeks, during which they commonly baptized above 200 persons, and on one occasion they baptized 75 in one day. They did not confine their preaching to one county, but extended their labors through the counties of Culpeper, Orange, Louisa, Caroline, Hanover, Goochland, Albemarle and even crossed the Blue Ridge into Shenandoah County. The fruits of these labours were indeed abundant. New churches were planted, new laborers were set apart and sent forth in God's vineyard. Among these early converts may be mentioned Lewis and Elijah Craig, John Waller,

James Chiles, David Thompson, John Burrus, Reuben Ford, William Webber, Joseph Anthony, and many others whose names will be held in everlasting remembrance. These young prophets drank deeply of the spirit of their fathers in the gospel. Difficulties could not check them nor dampen their flaming zeal. Let them be whatever kind—mocks, scoffs, threats, mobs, buffetings, sheriffs, courts, and dungeons—their combined force was spent in vain. The good work went on, and in a short time penetrated all the lower counties in Virginia. Meanwhile the labourers in that part of Virginia which lies south of James River, were not idle. The celestial fire would in some places advance regularly and gradually; while in others, it would be like a spark struck off that would fly away and kindle a new flame at some distant point.

CHAPTER VII

1768

FIRST IMPRISONMENT WAS IN FREDERICKSBURG JAIL

ORANGE COUNTY

County Seat—Orange

MOUNTAIN RUN

Constituted in 1768

Reference has been made to the building erected by Lewis Conner and others on "Mountain River" in 1767, and a brief quotation made from Taylor's biographical sketch of Elder Conner. The remainder of that quotation refers to this building after a church had been constituted in it:

"Here a church was constituted, but the writer does not know who was the pastor, but suppose it was Lewis Craig. This church maintained her visibility till about the commencement of the Revolution, the effects of which, and removals, caused its extinction."

Simple states that: "In 1766, about 2 or 3 years after he was baptized, Mr. Saunders began to preach, and in 1768 was ordained to the care of Mountain-run church, which was constituted at the same time. Mr. Saunders held the care of this church until it was dissolved in 1782, and most of the members joined Mount-poney."

And we have seen that Morgan Edwards names Nathaniel Saunders as their pastor, and not Lewis Craig as was supposed by Taylor's sketch.

Putting the accounts together it seems that the building was erected in 1767 and was considered an arm of Broad Run until it was constituted into a separate church in 1768, at which time Nathaniel Saunders was ordained and assumed its pastoral care.

LOUDON COUNTY

County Seat—Leesburg

The scene again shifts back north to Loudon County.

LITTLE RIVER

Constituted in March, 1768

Little River church, in Loudon County, was a branch of Broad-run in Fauquier, and "was some of the early fruits of David Thomas's ministry in Virginia. In this work, however, he was powerfully aided by Rev. Richard Major, their first pastor: for although the first seeds were sown by Mr. Thomas, yet Mr. Major watered and nourished the plants until he brought them to perfection. So rapidly did the gospel spread in this church, that just two years after they were constituted, they were the most numerous church in the association; having two hundred and seventy-two members. Her branches, however, extended into the neighboring parts. When any of these branches became sufficiently numerous, they were constituted into new churches: by which, the mother church was reduced in numbers." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 305.)

Morgan Edwards' *Notes*, page 43, give the following additional information with reference to these branches:

"It consists of 5 branches; one near *Little-river* where is a house 25 feet by 20, built in 1767 and land given by Wm West; another at Goose-creek; another at *Shanadore*; *Bull-run* another; another near Monacacy in Maryland in each of which is a meeting-house."

And Mr. Edwards adds that:

"The minister Rev. Richard Major whos assistants John Lewis, Jeremiah Moore, Eli Cleveland."

Then under the head of "Remarkables," he states that they "met with opposition from the presbyterians and mockings." So far no specific statements as to incidents of persecution in the neighborhood of Little-river have been located, unless the following statement of Mr. Edwards refers to this church, when he

says: "Amos Thompson came the second time he (Richard Major) preached to oppose." But at one of the branches of Little-river, namely Bull-run, in Fairfax County, we are told by Mr. Edwards, on page 44 of his *Notes*, that there were:

RICHARD MAJOR

*Warrants Issued and a Mob Came with Clubs to Assist
in its Execution, but They Failed*

"Warrants and clubs at Bull-run, where Thompson failed after preaching 3 years.

"The mob put the Davises to take him (giants), they would not but dared the people to touch them. Captain Scott issued a warrant—not executed in Fawquire—Damn him, say the mob, pull him down—"

Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), page 62, gives a more connected account of this persecution of Richard Major:

"At Bull Run there were warrants against him, and a mob, with clubs, rose to assist the execution of them; but here again they failed of their design, chiefly by means of the Davises, usually called the *giants*; these stout brothers had been prevailed on to oppose him; but after they heard him preach, they became well affected toward him, and threatened to chastise any that should disturb him."

RICHARD MAJOR

*A Mob Was So Outrageous That He Was in Danger
of Being Pulled to Pieces*

Dr. Taylor also states that:

"In Fauquier, the officer with a warrant from Capt. Scott, attempted to take him, but providentially failed. * * * The mob were very outrageous, but did no mischief, though his friends feared they would have pulled him to pieces."

The following incidents in the life of Richard Major are given by Dr. Taylor, but at what period of his ministry they occurred he does not state, and this author has been unable to find out; but they are inserted here:

RICHARD MAJOR

*Man Went to Meeting Determined to Kill
Him on Sight*

"A certain man, whose wife had been baptized by Mr. Major, determined to kill him on sight, and went to meeting for that purpose. He sat down in hearing, intending to catch at some obnoxious expression which might fall from the preacher, and under that pretence, to attack him. But God produced a different result; for the man, instead of executing his design, became so convicted that he could not keep on his feet; and was afterwards baptized by the man he intended to murder.

"Another actually attacked him with a club, in a violent manner. Mr. Major, being remarkable for great presence of mind, turned to him, and, in a solemn manner said, 'Satan, I command thee to come out of the man.' His club immediately began to fall, and the lion became as quiet as a lamb. These are a few of the many occurrences of this kind, that took place in the long life of this valuable man."

ORANGE COUNTY

County Seat—Orange

Returning to Orange County, it is evident that the carefully prepared letter of William Green to Nathaniel Saunders, dated February 7, 1767, and printed above, did not have the desired effect, for the controversy between the members of the Establishment and the Dissenters in Orange County did not cease at that time. There must have been a falling off in the attendance upon the stated services at the parish church, and conciliatory letters were no longer considered sufficient. When the spring of 1768 arrived, it found the civil and ecclesiastical authorities more determined than ever to check this tendency on the part of some of the members of the Rector's flock to wander away, or stroll into other folds; so they began to cite certain inhabitants to appear at Court and answer for the crime of absenting themselves from their parish church. In the Orange County Order Book for 1763-1769, page 490, this record may be found:

*Presentments in Orange County for Absenting Themselves
from the Parish Church*

"At a Court held May 26, 1768, The Grand Jury composed of Philip Bush, James Sugget, Zachary Taylor, &c, &c. present Joseph Craig, Nicholas Jones, James Stop, Joshua Stop, Henry Oakes, Wm. Strother & Holding Wilson for absenting themselves from their Parish Church."

Then on page 502 of the same Order Book we find three of those indicted complying with the Court's requirements and then being excused:

"William Strother, Joseph Craig, Holding Wilson and Joseph Spencer appeared in Court took the oath to his Majesty's personal Government prescribed by the Act of the First of William & Mary and made the profession of faith and subscribed the Articles of Religion Ezcept part of the 20th, 27th, 34th, 35th and 36th prescribed by the said Act they were presented for absenting themselves from the Parish Church for which they are excused."

Now Joseph Craig and Joseph Spencer were both constituent members of Upper-Spotsylvania, or "Craig's" church. Joseph Spencer does not appear in the list of those who were presented by the Grand Jury on May 26, and the reason he appeared may be simply that he desired to take the oath and subscribe to the articles of faith so that he might not be molested in the exercise of his religion. Only three out of the seven presented took the oath at that time, but the others may have been forced to do so at some later Court.

ELIJAH MORTON

*Ousted as a Justice of the Peace, Because
He Was a Baptist*

Mr. W. W. Scott's *History of Orange County, Virginia* (1907), page 50, gives this early and unique bit of persecution:

"Elijah Morton is discontinued, the Court conceiving him to be an unfit person to act as Justice of the Peace, for that in a plea of debt 'he declined, when requested by James Madison to make a quorum to try the case, because one of

the parties told him he did not wish it to be tried at that term; and yet when said Madison and Zachariah Burnley went into court and made a quorum the said Morton ascended the bench and sat in the cause; 'and for that', the order concludes, 'the said Morton is a promoter of scisms and particularly of the sect called Anabaptists'."

This curious order is dated 1768 and shows that the enemies of the cross were beginning to "sit up and take notice." To have a Justice of the Peace, who sympathized with the Baptists, to say nothing of promoting schisms, was not to be tolerated, and so he is ousted under a pretext.

SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY

County Seat—Spotsylvania

*Lewis Craig, John Waller, James Childs, James Reed,
William Mash Imprisoned in Fredericksburg. Lewis
Craig—Four Weeks. John Waller and the
Others Forty-three Days.*

It is greatly to be regretted that the court record of that earlier presentment of Lewis Craig, in Spotsylvania, has not been found, but when we come to consider the time when Craig, Waller, Childs, Reed and Mash were not only arrested but thrown into prison in Fredericksburg, the absence of all court records is a much greater loss. We have been unable to find any account of their arrest or trial, but there is an account of a petition they presented the court four weeks to the day after their arrest. It is found on the second page of the County Order Book for 1768-1774, and will be treated in its proper order.

In the absence of a court record it is fortunate that Dr. Semple has preserved a full account of their first instance of actual imprisonment. On page 15 of the 1810 edition of his *History* this account may be found:

"The first instance of actual imprisonment, we believe, that ever took place in Virginia, was in the county of Spotsylvania. On the 4th of June, 1768, John Waller, Lewis Craig, James Childs, &c. were seized by the sheriff, and haled before three magistrates, who stood in the meeting

house yard, and who bound them in the penalty of one thousand pounds, to appear at court two days after. At court they were arraigned as disturbers of the peace; on their trial, they were vehemently accused, by a certain lawyer, who said to the court, 'May it please your worships, these men are great disturbers of the peace, they cannot meet a man upon the road, but they must ram a text of scripture down his throat.' Mr. Waller made his own, and his brethren's defence so ingeniously, that they were somewhat puzzled to know how to dispose of them. They offered to release them, if they would promise to preach no more in the county, for a year and a day. This they refused: and, therefore were sent into close jail. As they were moving on, from the court-house to the prison, thro' the streets of Fredericksburg, they sang the hymn 'Broad is the road that leads to death,' &c.



OLD CRAIG'S BAPTIST CHURCH

The meeting-house of the first Baptist church that was constituted between the James and Rappahannock rivers, in Spotsylvania County, as it appeared in 1924.

It will be noticed in the foregoing account by Dr. Semple that he only mentions "John Waller, Lewis Craig, and James Childs," and then says "&c," and in another place after mentioning the same three he says "the others." Perhaps he did not know the names of the others, or, for some reason did not think it necessary to mention them. Then it is possible that his failure to do so

has been the cause of many historians taking it for granted that there were only "three men" imprisoned at this time. This writer searched a number of authorities to find out who "the others" were, and finally his long search was rewarded by finding that Morgan Edwards had preserved their names in his manuscript *Notes*, on page 20: "John Waller, James Reed, Lewis Craig, James Chiles, and Wm. Mash, an exhorter," making *five* instead of three which most of our historians have been led to believe comprised the group. In Mr. Edward's biographical sketch of John Waller, on page 20 of his *Notes*, he gives this account of that imprisonment:

"June 4, 1768 he and those other preachers were taken by the shieref and brough before 3 justices who stood in the meeting house yard and bound them to appear in court in a penalty of 5000£. However the shirief let them have their liberty witht any other security than their word: at court 2 days after most dreadful accusations were brought against him by one Oliver Towles, a lawyer, the court offered to release them in case they would desist preaching for a year and a day and give bond of 200£ for performance. This they refused, and thereupon were sent to prison, where he continued for 43 days."

In Morgan Edward's *Volumes*, page 33, he gives a fuller account of this imprisonment, and refers specifically to Mr. Waller in the following paragraph:

"Since he became a baptist he also hath suffered persecution. On June 4, 1768, he (with 4 others who shall be mentioned in due time) was taken by the sherif, and halled before three justices who stood without in the meeting house yard and who bound him to appear in court (two days after) in the penalty of 1000£. At court, most dreadful accusations were exhibited by a lawyer whose name is Oliver Towles. Mr. Waller made his defense in such a manner that the court offered to release him if he promised to desist from preaching for a year & a day; this he refused; and immediately was clapt in goal where he continued for 43 days. During his imprisonment the people flocked to the goal windows, to whom he preached, and made very serious impressions on the minds of eleven heads of families and many of their domestics, and others. The mob

did everything in their power to drive the people away, singing obscene songs, breeding riots &c but all in vain; at last they let him go out to get rid of him."

In an article of Dr. J. L. Burrows, published in the *Religious Herald*, for August 1, 1879, he has this to say about the bond required in this instance:

"All were bound over in £1,000 penalty each, to answer at court, two days later."

In Mr. Edwards's account of James Chiles, page 42 of his *Notes*, he gives the names of the three justices who put him in Fredericksburg jail, as being "Larkin Chew, Wm. Smith, John Carter, Esqrs," and says that he was "In fredericksburg goal 48 days." As all other accounts agree in naming "43 days" as the time they spent in jail, perhaps the "48" is merely a chirographical error.

Another discrepancy to be noticed in the various accounts has to do with the amount of bond that was required of these five men as they stood there in the yard of "Craig's" meeting house. Semple's account states it was "One thousand pounds"; in James B. Taylor's biographical sketch of Lewis Craig, page 86, he gives the amount as "two thousand pounds"; Mr. Edwards makes it "5000£"; and Dr. J. L. Burrows' newspaper article states that it was "£1,000 penalty each." Of course all can not be correct, but two of the earliest accounts would agree if it could be found that the word "each" had been omitted in Semple's statement of "one thousand pounds."

But no matter what their bond, they kept their word and appeared at court two days later. They were tried and sent to jail, because they would not refrain from preaching the gospel. In the same article of Dr. Burrows, above referred to, he gives this reason for their refusal to comply with the court's order:

"The law that prohibited their preaching, they dare not obey. It was in conflict with the supreme law of God their Sovereign. But they could cheerfully submit to the penalty which unjust human law inflicted, and thus demonstrate its oppressive injustice and pave the way for its repeal."

As they passed on through the streets of Fredericksburg to the gaol of Spotsylvania County, which at that time was located in Fredericksburg, they sang the old hymn:

“Broad is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there;
But wisdom shows a narrow path,
With here and there a traveler.

‘Deny thyself and take thy cross,’
Is the Redeemer’s great command;
Nature must count her gold but dross,
If she would gain this heav’nly land.

The fearful soul that tires and faints,
And walks the ways of God no more,
Is but esteemed almost a saint,
And makes his own destruction sure.

Lord, let not all my hopes be vain,
Create my heart entirely new,—
Which hypocrites could ne’er attain
Which false apostates never knew.”

These men could sing, like the Apostles in the jail at Phillippi, under the most trying circumstances, because there was joy in their souls. If there were those who ridiculed them as they went through the streets of that historic city singing that resounding song, what did they care? What would the nightingale care if the toad despised her singing? She would still sing on and leave the cold toad to his grouchy thoughts and dark shadows. And what cared these preachers for the sneers and scoffs of man who grovel upon the earth? They sang on in the ear and bosom of God.

But there were those who did not make light of these humble preachers, for Dr. Semple says that their singing that song through the streets on their way to jail “had an awful appearance.” It was so *awful* that while other counties continued for some time the practice of imprisoning preachers for preaching the gospel Spotsylvania never dared to repeat the experiment.

These five inoffensive Baptists were safely lodged in “close jail” in the town of Fredericksburg: It was about four years after

this event that the Court House of Spotsylvania, and the county gaol, were moved to their present location at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia.

Mr. Edward's account, from which we have already quoted, contains this additional information on pages 20 and 21 :

"During their stay they preached thro' the bars & were means of making very serious impressions on the minds of 11 heads of families and some of their domesticks with many others. The populace did everything they could invent to keep the people off and to plague the prisoners, till at last they let the prisoners out in order to get rid of them."

*A Friendly Rector of the Established Church Offered
to Go on Their Bond*

Another incident quite out of ordinary happened while they were confined in the Fredericksburg jail. It has to do first with the Tuckahoe church, now known as Mt. Zion, in the adjoining county of Caroline, but has a direct connection with this case. Semple's *History* (1810), page 119, thus records it :

"The first Baptist preacher, that ever ministered within the bounds of this church, was John Corbley. After Mr. Corbley had preached, the clergyman of the parish, who had come to hear him, attacked him, by way of argument. After the argument had been continued for some time, and, as might be expected, they came to no conclusion; the parson appointed the next Sunday, to preach against the Baptists. His text was, 'Will ye also go away?' His discourse made not much impression, and indeed from his subsequent conduct, there were grounds to suspect that he was shaken in his own mind. For, afterwards when Waller and Craig were put into prison at Fredericksburg, this gentleman went to the prison, and entered into a friendly conversation upon the subject of religion; and before he left them, offered to be their security, if they chose to give bond."

When the Spotsylvania County court convened in its next session on July 4, 1768, which was four weeks to the day following their arrest, they petitioned the court to release them. On

page 2 of the Spotsylvania County Order Book for 1768-1774, the court's action is recorded, as follows:

"July 4, 1768. Upon the petition of Lewis Craig, Jas. Chiles & John Waller, Jr. whose pet, is as follows: Gent, of the court etc. The court are of the opinion that it appearing to the court that the petitioners are prisoners & disturbers of the peace & committed for refusing to give sec y by order of last court for their good behavior the court are of the opinion that the ps be confined until they comply with the order of the court."

Their petition having been denied Lewis Craig entered into a recognizance to carry it to the General Court. What he obligated himself to pay, should he fail to do what was required, is not recorded, but we know that he and Benjamin Waller went from Fredericksburg down to Williamsburg, the Colonial Capital, and laid their petition before the Colonial authorities.

However, they found upon their arrival that "a good number of worthy gentlemen" had previously written to the deputy-governor, the Hon. John Blair, "complaining of the Baptists." The chief grievances these "worthy gentlemen" of Spotsylvania seem to have had against these early Baptists was that they were in the habit of "running into private houses and making dissensions." Upon the arrival of Lewis Craig and Benjamin Waller in Williamsburg they very promptly denied the charge, but found that the deputy-governor was ready for them, as he had previously consulted the attorney-general John Randolph, Jr., about the matter. In consequence of this Mr. Blair very properly referred the petitioners to this officer, and they "came back" bearing a letter from the attorney-general advising the deputy-governor that "their petition was a matter of right," and suggesting that he write the "king's attorney" of Spotsylvania County telling him that they were not to "molest these conscientious people, so long as they behaved themselves in a manner becoming pious christians, and in obedience to the laws."

On page 24 of Morgan Edwards' manuscript *Notes*, he has this to say with reference to Lewis Craig's connection with this imprisonment:

*Letter from the Deputy Governor, Honorable John Blair,
of Williamsburg, About These Imprisoned Preachers*

"He was 4 weeks in Fredericksburg goal with John Waller and 4 others—Made the instrument of delivering his fellow prisoners by entering into recognitance, and waiting on the president (Honorable John Blair who upon the decease of the governor was then commander in chief of Virginia) and obtaining a letter to the kings attorney (Mr John Lewis) in their favour." (Then he gives the Honorable Mr. Blair's letter.)

Dr. Semple's account is on pages 15 and 16 of the 1810 edition of his *History*, and is substantially the same as Mr. Edwards's:

"After four weeks confinement, Lewis Craig was released from prison, and immediately went down to Williamsburg, to get a release for his companions. He waited on the deputy-governor, the Hon. John Blair, stated the case before him, and received the following letter, directed to the King's attorney in Spotsylvania:

"'Sir,—I lately received a letter, signed by a good number of worthy gentlemen, who are not here, complaining of the Baptists; the particulars of their misbehavior are not told, any further than their running into private houses, and making dissensions. Mr. Craig and Mr. Benjamin Waller are now with me, and deny the charge; they tell me they are willing to take the oaths, as others have; I told them I had consulted the attorney-general, who is of opinion, that the general court only have a right to grant licenses, and therefore I referred them to the court; but, on their application to the attorney-general, they brought me his letter, advising me to write to you. That their petition was a matter of right, and that you may not molest these conscientious people, so long as they behave themselves in a manner becoming pious christians, and in obedience to the laws, till the court, when they intend to apply for license, and when the gentlemen, who complain, may make their objections, and be heard. The act of toleration (it being found by experience, that persecuting dissenters, increases their numbers,) has given them a right to apply, in a proper manner, for licensed houses, for the worship of God, according to

their consciences, and I persuade myself, the gentlemen will quietly overlook their meetings, till the Court. I am told, they administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, near the manner we do, and, differ in nothing from our church, but in that of Baptism, and their renewing the ancient discipline, by which, they have reformed some sinners, and brought them to be truly penitent. Nay, if a man of theirs is idle, and neglects to labour and provide for his family as he ought, he incurs their censures, which have had good effects. If this be their behaviour, it were to be wished, we had some of it among us: But, at least, I hope, all may remain quiet, till the Court.

“I am, with great respects to the gentlemen, Sir,

“Your humble servant,

John Blair.

“Williamsburg, July 16, 1768.’

“When the letter came to the attorney he would have nothing to say in the affair. Waller and the others continued in jail 43 days, and were then discharged, without any conditions. While in prison, they constantly preached thro’ the grates. The mob without, used every exertion to prevent the people from hearing, but to little purpose. Many heard indeed, upon whom the word was in power and demonstration.”

We conclude that the other four prisoners, John Waller, James Chiles, James Reed and William Mash were released on July 19th, as 43 days from June 6th, the date of their trial and commitment, would bring it up to that time. If this calculation is correct then it is worth noticing that Lewis Craig and Benjamin Waller lost no time on their return trip to Fredericksburg, for it was only three days after they had secured Mr. Blair's fine letter. If they made the trip in that length of time it was a remarkable feat for Fredericksburg is one hundred miles from Williamsburg, and the roads of that day were not hard-surfaced and there were no automobiles. Ordinarily the trip between Williamsburg and Richmond required two days, and one traveler reported in 1796 that it took him from eight o'clock in the morning until eleven o'clock at night to make the trip in a stage-coach.

And Richmond is only half-way to Fredericksburg. But these brethren were the bearers of good news and they may have traveled night and day.

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet
of him that bringeth good tidings.”

Mr. S. D. Gordon, who was the clerk of Waller's church in 1924, told the author of this volume that there was a tradition in his neighborhood that the civil authorities tried to turn John Waller out of jail at night, but he refused to leave until the next morning—preferring to leave the prison in broad day light.

Dr. Semple's account also states that :

“After their discharge which was a kind of triumph, Waller, Craig, and their compeers in the ministry, resumed their labours, with redoubled vigor, gathering fortitude from their late sufferings, thanking God that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ and his gospel. Day and night, and indeed almost every day and night, they held meetings in their own and the adjacent neighbourhoods. The spread of the gospel, and of Baptist principles, was equal to all their exertions ; insomuch, that in very few sections of Virginia, did the Baptist cause appear more formidable to its enemies, and more consoling to its friends, than in Spotsylvania ; and we may add, so it is at this day.”

In writing about Lewis Craig's experience at this time, Dr. J. L. Burrows makes this comment in an article in the *Religious Herald* of August 8, 1872 :

“This imprisonment and its counsel of ‘quiet’ had no effect in silencing Craig and his compeers. With inflamed zeal and redoubled energy, they held meetings almost every day and night, until they filled Spotsylvania and the neighboring counties with their doctrine. They were filled with holy joy that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ and his gospel. Baptist doctrines and usages soon were predominant in that whole region, and upon these foundations laid by the shackled hands of the imprisoned fathers, their sons have industriously builded in all the generations since.”

James Chiles was an early preacher in the neighborhood of Blue Run church, in Orange County, became the assistant pastor of the Louisa church, and eventually became a pioneer in Albemarle County, where many were converted through his ministry. He was a delegate from Louisa County to the First Separate Baptist Association, in 1771, and afterwards moved to South Carolina, where he was instrumental in planting a large church.

Notwithstanding many attempts, the author has been unable to secure any information concerning the time or place of his death or the place of his burial.

The jail in which these preachers were imprisoned was no doubt the same one described by William Byrd in 1732 when he visited the first iron mines in America, located at Germanna. In his "Progress to the Mines," in *The Westover Manuscripts*, page 138, he speaks of stopping with a Col. Waller, at Fredericksburg, and then quaintly adds:

"I was oblig'd to rise Early here, that I might not starve my Landlord whose constitution requires him to swallow a Bffsteak before the Sun blesses the world with its genial Rays. However, he was so complaisant as to bear the gnawing of his stomach till 8 o'clock for my Sake. Colo. Waller, after a Score of Loud Hems to clear his Throat broke his fast along with us. When this necessary affair was dispatched col. Willis walk't me about the town of Fredericksburg."

*The Jail at Fredericksburg Was a Substantial Structure,
Built of Stone*

The one thing about this young town that appealed most forcibly to the practical nature of Mr. Byrd was the stone quarry which was located nearby, and the failure of the inhabitants to make use of it. He describes the stone as being of excellent quality and states that:

"The only edifice of stone yet built is the prison; the Walls of which are strong enough to hold Jack Shepherd, if he had been transported hither."

Now Jack Sheppard was an English highway-man and robber, who was plying his nefarious business in that country in

the early twenties of the eighteenth century. He was captured and condemned to death, but made a series of most remarkable escapes only to be recaptured each time. He made two escapes from Newgate, in one instance at least he was imprisoned in the strongest part of that prison and actually chained to the floor, yet by a combination of strength and skill he escaped through the chimney to the roof of the prison, whence he lowered himself into the adjoining house. These marvelous escapes from prison made him almost a popular hero, and he was made the chief character of much romance. His portrait was painted by Sir John Thornhill; a pantomime entitled "Harlequin Sheppard" was produced at Drury Lane, and even Daniel Defoe, a staunch Baptist, wrote a narrative about him in 1724. Perhaps this account had found its way across the Atlantic and fallen into the hands of William Byrd, so that this strong fortress at Fredericksburg struck Mr. Byrd as being an ideal place to confine this noted robber and vulgar scoundrel, who did not hesitate to rob his only real friend.

Thirty-six years after William Byrd's visit to Fredericksburg, and his comment upon the strength of its bastille, four ministers and one exhorter were put in close confinement in it.

Now John Waller was born in 1741, nine years after Mr. Byrd's visit to Spotsylvania, and the Col. William Waller, who entertained him so courteously, was the uncle of Elder John Waller. It is a strange coincidence that the guest should mention so particularly the jail that would some years later become the lodging place of a nephew of his host.

The Fredericksburg jail may have been a strong structure, but the walls were never built, the chains never forged, the guards never breathed, that could hold in bondage him whom God willed to be free.

In the imprisonment of these five Baptists,—four preachers and one layman—in the Fredericksburg jail, and in fact in all the subsequent imprisonments throughout the State, both civil and ecclesiastical powers acted as though they were infallible. They bore a strong resemblance to that French woman Benjamin Franklin used to tell about, who in a dispute with her sister said:

"I don't know how it happened, sister, but I meet with nobody but myself, that is always in the right."

These persecuted preachers were not bigots but believers; not church-men but Christ's men; not truth suppressors but truth disseminators.

Frequent reference will be made in these pages to "The Grates" through which our imprisoned preachers proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation, as they did in Fredericksburg. "The Grates" were the strong iron bars that ran perpendicularly or horizontally, or perhaps both ways in most instances, across the small or large windows, or openings in the wall of the cell where they were confined. Not a single jail is now standing through whose "grates" these preachers sent forth the Words of Life, except the one at Accomac Court House, in which Elijah Baker was confined. This jail is in reality only a Debtor's Prison, but it may have been used for all kinds of felons.

Doubtless there were many different kinds of "Grates" and a variety of sizes in the buildings used in Colonial times as county gaols. For example the windows in the Fauquier gaol were only twelve inches square, and the Caroline County gaol window was so high up in the wall, that (according to the grand-daughter of John Young, who was incarcerated in this gaol for so many months), the prisoner could see nothing—only a patch of sky. All the other references found have to do with windows close to the ground as in the case of Chesterfield, Culpeper, Alexandria, Accomac, Middlesex and other county gaols. And there may have been a diversity of "grates" over the windows also, but we are perhaps safe in assuming that none of them possessed anything like the generous proportions which the artist has given to "the grates" in Charlotte Corday's cell window. Dr. George W. Beale, in his article *Baptist Beginnings in Virginia*, found in the *Religious Herald* for June 8, 1899, makes this comment:

"A famous portrait of Charlotte Corday has arrested many an earnest gaze, and her pensive face has gathered interest from the iron grating which forms its setting. The faces and forms of many of the early Baptist preachers of this State should wear in our eyes a pathetic and heightened interest as we look back through the years at them behind their prison bars."

But high or low windows, large or small grates, these heralds of the cross, Waller, Craig, Chiles, Reed and Mash, and all who

followed in their train, overcame all the obstacles that were in the way and preached to the crowds without the jails through "the grates."

The word "gaol," as used in the original documents and court records of that early day, designated a place of confinement for criminals. It is an earmark of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and is an old obsolete word for jail. It was erroneously spelt in many of the old records as "goal." Now a "goal" is described by the lexicographers as the "objective point or terminus that one is striving to reach," but a "gaol" is next to the last place on earth to which any man would want to go.

The Spotsylvania imprisonment was one of the earliest, if not the first of its kind in the new world, and much has been written and published about it. And we are not surprised that it is so, for an event so strange and so cruel in the annals of our State, and one that ushered in that "Reign of terror" over our Baptist preachers, could hardly do less than cause many a scribe to take his pen in hand and give the world the benefit of his reflections. A majority of these writers have evidently followed Dr. Semple's account and speak of only three men as having been imprisoned when there were really five, as has been shown. And in many other ways much that has come within our observation is inaccurate or incomplete, to say the least of it. There is one notable reference to this imprisonment which, in a work like this, would be culpable to omit.

*Patrick Henry's Supposed Speech in Defense
of Waller and His Companions*

It is lengthy yet the account of this imprisonment would be incomplete without it. It has to do with the question of who defended these imprisoned preachers in Fredericksburg. Dr. Semple says that John Waller defended himself and his brethren "so ingeniously" that the court was "somewhat puzzled to know how to dispose of them," but others have stated that Patrick Henry acted as their defender, and his speech has actually been printed and given wide publication. It appeared first, we believe, in *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record*, for May 1845, which is number 5 in Volume IV. This magazine was published

in Philadelphia. Then in 1850 Rev. William Henry Foote, D. D., published his *Sketches of Virginia*, and on page 317 this speech of Patrick Henry's appears with the author's comment upon it:

"Patrick Henry, who had a few years before brought himself into notice by his famous plea against the parsons, in Hanover, hearing of the situation of these Baptist ministers confined in Spottsylvania jail, rode some fifty miles to volunteer his services on the day of their second trial. He entered the court-house, almost entirely unknown, while the indictment was reading by the clerk. The king's attorney having made some remarks in defence of the prosecution, Mr. Henry taking the paper containing the indictment, said:

" 'May it please your worships, I think I heard read by the prosecutor, as I entered the house, the paper I now hold in my hand. If I rightly understood, the king's attorney has framed an indictment for the purpose of arraigning, and punishing by imprisonment, these three inoffensive persons before the bar of this Court for a crime of great magnitude,—as disturbers of the peace. May it please the Court, what did I hear read? Did I hear it distinctly,—or was it a mistake of my own? Did I hear an expression, as of a crime, that these men, whom your worships are about to try for a misdemeanor, are charged with,—with—what?'— Then in a low, solemn, heavy tone he continued—'preaching the gospel of the Son of God?' Pausing amid profound silence, he waved the paper three times round his head, then raising his eyes and hands to heaven, with peculiar and impressive energy, he exclaimed—'Great God!' A burst of feeling from the audience followed this exclamation. Mr. Henry resumed—'May it please your worships, in a day like this,—when truth is about to burst her fetters,—when mankind are about to be aroused to claim their natural and inalienable rights—when the yoke of oppression that has reached the wilderness of America, and the unnatural alliance of ecclesiastical and civil power, are about to be dissevered,—at such a period, when liberty,—liberty of conscience,—is about to wake from her slumberings, and inquire into the reason of such charges as I find exhibited here today in this indictment,'—here he paused, and alternately cast his piercing eyes upon the Court and upon the prisoners, and resumed,—'If I am not deceived, according to the contents of the paper I now hold in my hand, these men are accused of preaching

the gospel of the Son of God!—Great God!’ A deeper impression was visible as he paused, and slowly waved the paper round his head. ‘May it please your worships, there are periods in the history of man, when corruption and depravity have so long debased the human character, that man sinks under the weight of the oppressor’s hand,—becomes his servile, his abject slave; he licks the hand that smites him; and in this state of servility he receives his fetters of perpetual bondage. But may it please your worships, such a day has passed away. From that period when our fathers left the land of their nativity for these American wilds,—from the moment they placed their feet upon the American continent, from that moment despotism was crushed, the fetters of darkness were broken, and heaven decreed that man should be free,—free to worship God according to the Bible. Were it not for this, in vain were all their sufferings and bloodshed to subjugate this new world, if we their offspring must still be oppressed and persecuted. But, may it please your worships, permit me to inquire once more, for what are these men about to be tried? This paper says, for preaching the gospel of the Saviour to Adam’s fallen race.’ For the third time he slowly waved the indictment around his head, and lifting his eyes to heaven in a solemn dignified manner, and again looking at the Court, he exclaimed with the full power of his strong voice—‘What law have they violated?’ The scene now became painful,—the audience were excited,—the attorney was agitated,—the bench and bar were moved; and the presiding magistrate exclaimed, ‘Sheriff, discharge these men’.”

The next account of this *historic* speech of Patrick Henry, was located in *The Baptist Denomination*, pages 311-314, which was published in 1856, by D. C. Haynes.

In 1858 a sermon was preached in Nashville, Tennessee, before the General Association of Middle Tennessee and North Alabama, by Rev. W. H. Barksdale, A. M., and published by request of that body in pamphlet form. The subject of this discourse was “Pedobaptist Concessions to Baptist Principles.” On page 59 of this pamphlet this speech of Patrick Henry appears almost in full.

In 1870 Dr. Geo. B. Taylor published his historical novel entitled *Walter Ennis*, and on page 280 he mentions Henry's speech as though it were a historical fact.

In 1876 a Centennial Memorial address was delivered by Rev. G. S. Bailey, D. D., which was published by the American Baptist Publication Society, and on page 42 we have this reference to this speech of Mr. Henry's:

"It is recorded by Dr. John M. Peck, that about the year 1770, when three Baptist ministers were tried at Fredericksburg, Virginia, Patrick Henry, the great orator, rode some sixty miles to attend the trial and unexpectedly entered the court room as the indictment was being read," etc.

Then he goes on to quote much of this supposed speech, giving as his authority *The Baptist Memorial* for the year 1845, page 131.

In John Esten Cooke's *Virginia* (1884), page 391, after having referred to this imprisonment, he states:

"When they were arraigned for 'preaching the Gospel contrary to law', Patrick Henry, who had ridden fifty miles to witness the trial, suddenly arose and exclaimed:

"May it please your worships, what did I hear read? Did I hear an expression that these men whom your worships are about to try for misdemeanor are charged with *preaching the Gospel of the Son of God?*"

"The solemn voice is said to have deeply moved all who heard him. The State prosecutor 'turned pale with agitation,' and the court were near dismissing the accused."

In more recent years a prominent Baptist minister in Virginia copied this speech from Foote's *Sketches* and sent it to the *Religious Herald* for publication. It was published and at the close of the article the writer asked this question, "Can the Baptists ever forget Patrick Henry?" Certainly not, but it is fortunate that the temple of memory which the Baptists have erected in honor of this illustrious patriot, does not rest upon a foundation so unsubstantial as this reported speech.

And later still a pamphlet was published by another prominent Baptist preacher, which gives the story in connection with the

erection of a monument at Bowling Green, Caroline County, Virginia, on July 9, 1922. This monument is dedicated to the memory of the preachers who were imprisoned in that county. On page 7 of his pamphlet the following reference to this Fredericksburg incident is found:

"In 1768 that flaming fire and patriot, Patrick Henry, seven years before his famous address in St. John's church, went from Hanover to Fredericksburg to defend, without pay, several Baptist preachers who were in jail for preaching the gospel. They were set free through his matchless eloquence and powers of persuasion."

As late as 1929, when W. H. T. Squires, M. A., D. D., published his *Through Centuries Three*, this legendary story persists.

On pages 292 and 293 this version is given:

"The Established Church opposed the Baptists, as they had previously been against the Friends. Three Baptist clergymen, John Waller, James Childs and Lewis Craig, were arrested in Spotsylvania for preaching without a license (June, 1768.) When offered liberty if they would desist, like Peter and John of old, they declared that they could but speak for Jesus. When they marched to prison through Fredericksburg singing hymns, excitement was intense. Crowds heard these earnest, though poorly educated men preach from the prison windows.

"Patrick Henry rode from Louisa* to volunteer his services as attorney.

"When the three Baptists were brought to trial for 'preaching the Gospel contrary to law,' a hush fell upon the court room, crowded to capacity.

"The great Commoner strode forward: 'May it please your worships, what did I hear read?' he asked, in tones that sent a thrill through the multitude. 'Did I hear that these men are to be tried for a misdemeanor—charged with preaching the Gospel of the Son of God?'

"The state's attorney turned pale and trembled. The court hastily dismissed the accused.

* Other authors name "Hanover" as the place of Mr. Henry's residence.

"In Chesterfield, Middlesex and Caroline counties, these petty persecutions continued.

"But wherever a Baptist was arrested or punished, their cause grew—great numbers sympathized with them."

Now all these instances, which we have quoted, so widely separated as to time and place, are but illustrations of how an ill-founded rumor can gain publicity and cling to life with wonderful tenacity. If Patrick Henry *had* defended these preachers at Fredericksburg it would have added only one more laurel leaf to the never-fading crown that already rests upon the brow of that illustrious character, noble patriot, and friend of the Baptists: and one more beautiful incident to that glorious day when Baptist ministers preferred freedom of conscience to freedom of body, and willingly consented to the confinement of the latter in order that they, and those who came after them, might some day have and enjoy the liberty of the former. It is a great pity to be compelled to bring into question such a beautiful and interesting incident, and the author dislikes very much to do it; but he believes that this reported speech of Patrick Henry is a fabrication pure and simple, and that a cursory examination of the records in the case will be sufficient to prove his contention.

According to Dr. Semple's account these men were arrested on June the fourth and bound over in the penalty of a thousand pounds to appear at court two days later. The three magistrates stood in the "meeting-house yard" of what is now known as Craig's church (situated in the northwestern part of Spotsylvania County), and accepted their bond without any other security than their mere word. When they did appear in court at Fredericksburg two days later, or on June the sixth, we are told that John Waller, and *not* Patrick Henry, defended himself and his brethren—and he did it "so ingeniously that they were somewhat puzzled to know how to dispose of them." As there were neither telephone nor telegraph lines in that day for the quick transmission of a message between Fredericksburg and Hanover County, Mr. Henry's home, nor railroads for the quick transportation of human beings from one place to another, they were limited to the stage-coach and pony-express. As Mr. Henry's home was separated from the place of trial by fifty or sixty miles, it can be

seen that the mere physical features of such a trip presented a discouraging undertaking. If it be supposed that a messenger was dispatched post haste to Mr. Henry at his home in Hanover County conveying the intelligence of their predicament and soliciting his services in their behalf, let it be borne in mind that the messenger must not only cover that distance of fifty or more miles, but that Mr. Henry must also cover the same distance on the return trip. Then add to the difficulty of such an undertaking the fact that both trips had to be accomplished in not more than forty-eight hours, perhaps much less time, in order for him to be present at their trial on June the 6th. If the arrest of these preachers occurred late in the day of "June 4th" and their trial early in the day of "June 6th" the possibility of Mr. Henry's presence would be materially reduced. But suppose the opposition should contend that there was another trial at some later date, how would that effect the case? With reference to such a contention, the reply would be that in no other case in the whole State were these imprisoned preachers favored with a "second" trial, and why should those in Spotsylvania be so honored, or humored? Again, why would Patrick Henry say, "If I rightly understood, the king's attorney has framed an indictment for the purpose of arraigning, and punishing by imprisonment, these *three* inoffensive persons before the bar of this court." Why would he say *three* when *five* men good and true, sat there before him?

But leaving the physical features out of the case for a moment, for the sake of argument, let us inquire why the world had to wait for seventy-seven years before being told about that wonderful defense of Mr. Henry's, for it was not until 1845 that any account of it was published. If there is any earlier reference to it, it has thus far escaped notice. If it had happened, is it not more than probable that some of the participants, or their contemporaries, would have mentioned it before three quarters of a century had passed by? But no such statement has yet been found, although the most careful search for it in many of our histories has been made. When these preachers were offered their liberty on condition that they refrain from preaching, it had no more effect upon them than the same proposition had upon John Bunyan. Accordingly they were sent to jail, where Dr. Semple says they remained for "Forty-three days." So they could not have

been released on the day of their trial, as the conclusion of this speech would indicate. The record says they were put in "close jail," and it was not until after the lapse of four long weeks that one of their number, Lewis Craig, was released. He went immediately to Williamsburg and secured the foregoing letter (see page 100), from the Hon. John Blair, which was dated July 16, or ten days after his release and a month and ten days after their trial and commitment. The forty-three days they are said to have "continued in jail," would bring the date of their release to the 19th of July, or three days after the date of the Honorable John Blair's letter.

But let the reader hear another witness, who tried to check this error more than forty years ago. In Dr. Geo. W. Beale's revision of Semple's *History*, published in 1894, there is a footnote on page 32, which is as follows:

"It has been believed in some quarters that Patrick Henry represented these imprisoned preachers before the court and pleaded for their release, and the speech made by him in their defense has been published and widely circulated. There is however, no historical ground for this belief, and the speech accredited to Henry has been shown to be wholly apocryphal. It is the production of Rev. J. M. Peck, and 'what he supposed Patrick Henry might have said.' Mr. Henry does appear to have been counsel for one or more imprisoned Baptist preachers in Caroline county."

More than twenty years before the above was written there had been a lengthy correspondence in the *Religious Herald* about this speech and while it is lengthy, it has been thought best to include it also, so that the reader may have all the evidence before him and be his own judge.

This correspondence started with a review of Ray's *Baptist Succession*, found in the *Religious Herald*, of January 5, 1871, page 2, column 7, by Dr. J. B. Jeter. He states:

"We are sorry, but not surprised, that the author should have been seduced into the quotation of the speech of Patrick Henry in defense of three Baptist ministers in Virginia as authentic history. Rev. J. M. Peck, D.D., told us (the senior editor) that he was the author of it. The next *Herald*

will contain an article entirely unconnected with this notice, confirming this fact. Besides, the speech bears internal proof that it was composed by a New Englander. Henry never said: 'Our fathers left the land of their nativity for settlement in these American wilds—for liberty—for civil and religious liberty—for liberty of conscience.' No such motive brought the immigrants to the colony of Virginia. It is the language of the Puritan, not of the Cavalier. In our opinion, the speech was an unjustifiable falsification of history: but it was not so in the judgment of Dr. Peck. We discussed that question. We call attention to the spuriousness of the speech that it may be eliminated from the next edition of the work. It is not needed to prove the persecutions of the Virginia Baptists. Semple's *History*, and Taylor's *Lives of the Virginia Baptist Ministers*, are good authority on that point."

The article referred to in the above that was to be printed in the next *Herald* proved to be an open letter addressed to Rev. Geo. B. Taylor about his historical novel, *Walter Ennis*, and was from Rev. L. A. Alderson, of Atchison, Kansas. It may be found in the *Religious Herald* for January 12, 1871, and contains this paragraph bearing directly upon this much mooted question:

"In the year 1857, meeting with William C. Rives in Lewisburg, he remarked that he had been studying the history of the early Baptists in Virginia with a great deal of interest, that he was then preparing for the press a *Life of James Madison*, that he was surprised at the persecution the Baptists had endured, that this persecution has given tone to the political views of James Madison, and that the Baptists, aided by Patrick Henry, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, had done more than all other denominations in securing religious liberty in Virginia. I asked him if he had read the speech of Patrick Henry in defense of John Waller, Lewis Craig, and others, who were imprisoned in Fredericksburg. He said he had not, but would be thankful if I would procure a copy for him. Failing to find the speech in my file of the *Herald*, I wrote to the veteran editor—William Sands—and was told, in reply, that the speech referred to was the production of Rev. J. M. Peck; that Bro. Peck had met, in the West, with an aged brother, who informed him that Patrick Henry appeared in defense of the

imprisoned ministers in Fredericksburg, and that Bro. Peck, on the spur of the occasion, wrote what he supposed Patrick Henry might have said in their defense. I am glad that you have preserved this eloquent speech in 'Walter Ennis,' but not because it emanated from Patrick Henry, for, from all I can learn, he was not in Fredericksburg at that time."

These two articles in the *Herald* of January 5th and 12th, by the editors of that paper and Mr. Alderson, called forth another on the same subject by Horatio Gates Jones, of Philadelphia. It appeared in the *Religious Herald* for February 23, 1871, and while it is unusually long, the author feels that this whole controversy would be incomplete without publishing it in its entirety. The communication follows:

PATRICK HENRY'S SPEECH IN DEFENCE

OF THE

VIRGINIA BAPTIST MINISTERS

By Horatio Gates Jones

In a recent number of the *Religious Herald* I read a notice of Mr. Ray's new book on *Baptist Succession*—I have also read Mr. Alderson's letter in the *Herald* of January 12th—and am very much surprised that both the editor and Mr. Alderson appear to doubt that Patrick Henry—the great Virginia orator—ever made the celebrated speech attributed to him, in defence of Waller, Craig, and other Virginia Baptist Ministers, when they were arraigned for "*preaching the gospel of the Son of God.*" The *Herald* says: "Rev. J. M. Peck, D. D., told (the senior editor) that he was the author of it. * * * * * Besides, the speech bears internal proof that it was composed by a New Englander." Mr. Alderson says that, desiring to procure a copy of the speech for the late Hon. William C. Rives, he "wrote to the veteran editor, William Sands, and was told in reply, that the speech referred to was the production of Rev. J. M. Peck; that Bro. Peck had met in the West with an aged brother, who informed him that Patrick Henry appeared in defence of the imprisoned ministers in Fredericksburg, and that Bro. Peck, on the spur of the occasion, wrote what he supposed Patrick Henry might have said in their defence."

I am strongly inclined to think that both of these statements are incorrect, and that Bro. Sands and the senior editor of the *Herald* have failed to recall *the exact* words of Dr. Peck, or the *meaning* of his statement, when he said that he was "the author" of Patrick Henry's speech. As a recorder of events, and as a collector of historic facts, pertaining to the early trials and sufferings of the Baptists, Dr. Peck had few superiors; and above all he valued the truth. Those who knew him will bear testimony to the truth of what I say, that he never claimed an honor to which he was not justly entitled.

Now, I think I can show pretty conclusively that Patrick Henry, whose soul was ever on fire when he saw the poor oppressed, did really and in fact make the speech referred to. Perhaps the words were not the same which he uttered—nay, they could not be, for it was not in the power of mortal man to record his words. As his accomplished biographer, The Hon. William Wirt, has said, "He spoke in a manner which language cannot tell." But from the well known character of Mr. Henry, from the peculiar circumstances of the case, from his cordial dislike to the arrogant and unjust claims of the hierarchy which prevailed in Virginia, from the admitted fact that our brethren of that day were "in prisons oft," and were released without the payment of their fines, and from the fact that he was an honest lawyer, I am inclined to believe that the celebrated speech was made by Col. Henry.

And now for the proofs. It is admitted by all who know anything about Baptist history, that John Waller, Lewis Craig, James Childs, John Corbley, and many other Virginia Baptist ministers, were imprisoned for the offence of preaching the gospel, without having obtained a license from the county court. It is also admitted that Patrick Henry was the most eloquent advocate of his day, and that he had gained immense popularity and a great reputation in the celebrated "Parson's case," which occurred in or about the year 1768. It was then that he arrayed himself on the side of the people, and on the day of the trial he told his uncle, the Rev. Patrick Henry, who was a clergyman of the Established church, "That in the controversy, both his heart and judgement, as well as his professional duty, were on the side of the people."—*Wirt's life*, p. 24. This shows how he felt as an individual, and how he would likely act as counsel, when

questions concerning the rights of the people were concerned. The probabilities, therefore, are, that Patrick Henry, in a case involving the great question of liberty of conscience, where he would have a grand opportunity to display his great genius as an orator, would readily espouse the cause of the oppressed, though they were the poor and despised Baptists. But, did he really do so, and did he ever make that celebrated speech, or was John Mason Peck the author of it? These are the questions to be settled, and happily for the sake of history and the truth, I am able to answer these questions in *the exact words of Dr. John M. Peck himself*. In Vol. IV, No. 5 of *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record*, for May, 1845, edited by Rev. R. Babcock, D. D., Rev. John O. Choules, D. D., and Rev. John M. Peck, D. D. (all of whom, except Dr. Babcock, have gone to their rest on high), there is to be found a full and precise account of this whole matter. It is entitled "Baptist History. Speech of Patrick Henry." The article is signed J. M. P., Philadelphia, 25th March, 1845, proving that the *author* of the *article* was Dr. Peck. As the whole is too long for insertion in your columns, I shall only give extracts from it.

Dr. Peck says: "From a venerable correspondent, the Rev. Thomas S. Hinde, now of Mount Carmel, Illinois, we have obtained a series of interesting facts and sketches of the Baptists of the 'olden time' in Virginia and Kentucky. *Amongst these is the outline of a SPEECH made by the distinguished PATRICK HENRY, at the trial of three Baptist ministers at Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania county, about 1770.* Before we give the statements and the speech, it is necessary to adduce the evidence to sustain this scrap of history.

"Mr. Hinde is a native Virginian, but emigrated with his father, a distinguished physician and surgeon, to Kentucky, in his boyhood. * * * With habits of singular industry and care, he possesses a most tenacious memory. His writings and collections—portion of which we have seen—are voluminous. * * * He has furnished us with several sheets in manuscript, from which we have selected the sketches we are about to lay before our readers. Some twenty-five years since, he visited the 'Old Dominion,' his native land, and gathered the facts from the old men then living. Of these, he refers particularly to the statements of Mr. Bartlett Bennett and Mr. William Ficklin, *who were in*

the court-house and heard Henry and narrated the speech which Mr. Hinde has preserved in manuscript. Probably some of our Virginia correspondents may trace up the particulars. Possibly the very indictment, which, with such thrilling effect, Patrick Henry waved around his head, may yet be found on file amongst the colonial papers of Spotsylvania county. Both Semple and Benedict narrate several instances in which Mr. Henry, with patriotic zeal, defended the persecuted Baptist; but neither mentions this instance. * * *

"The Baptists were the most numerous class of dissenters, and the first to resist the established hierarchy. It is not certain that there was ever an existing law in the colony of Virginia that authorized the imprisonment of any person for preaching the gospel. The law for preserving peace and order, and to 'preserve the purity of doctrine and unity of the church,' was so construed; and whenever the preachers were apprehended and imprisoned, it was done by virtue of a peace warrant. The first conviction and actual imprisonment under this construction of the law was in Spotsylvania county, on the 4th of June, 1768, when John Waller, Lewis Craig, James Childs and others, were dragged before the magistrates and bound over for trial. Three* days after, they were put on their trial as 'disturbers of the peace.' The prosecuting attorney made his formidable charge: 'May it please your worships, these men are great disturbers of the peace; they cannot meet a man in the road, but they must ram a text of Scripture down his throat.' Elder Waller made an ingenious and able defence, and perplexed the judges to know what to do with these singular criminals. * * * Mr. Hinde did not learn from his informers whether the successful defence of Mr. Henry was at the liberation from prison of Waller, Craig, and Childs, before referred to, or on another similar occasion. Mr. Ficklin's account, who lived near Fredericksburg, and was present on the occasion, gives the names of 'Lewis Craig, Joseph Craig and Aaron Bledsoe.' Mr. Bennett, who was also present, and gave from memory the 'speech,' did not give the names of the persecuted preachers, but states 'three Baptist preachers.' Be this as it may, an indictment had been issued against them for '*preaching the gospel of the Son of God,*' contrary to the

* All the other references state that it was *two* days after they were apprehended.

statute in that case provided; and therefore, disturbers of the peace. The clerk was reading the indictment in a slow and formal manner, and as he pronounced the crime with emphasis, 'For preaching the gospel of the Son of God, a plain-dressed man, who had just rode up to the court-house, entered and took his seat within the bar. He was known to the court and lawyers, but a stranger to the mass of spectators who had gathered on the occasion. This was Patrick Henry, who, on hearing of this prosecution, had rode some fifty or sixty miles, from his residence in Hanover county, to volunteer his services in their defence. He listened to the further reading of the indictment with marked attention; the first sentence of which that had caught his ear was 'for preaching the gospel of the Son of God.' When it was finished, and the prosecuting attorney had submitted a few remarks, Henry arose, reached out his hand and received the paper and addressed the court."

PATRICK HENRY'S SPEECH

"May it please your worships, I think I heard read by the prosecutor, as I entered this house, the paper I now hold in my hand. If I have rightly understood, the King's attorney of this colony has framed an indictment for the purpose of arraigning and punishing by imprisonment three inoffensive persons, before the bar of this court, for a crime of great magnitude—as disturbers of the peace. May it please the court, what did I hear read? Did I hear it distinctly, or was it a mistake of my own? Did I hear an expression, as if a crime, that these men, whom your worships are about to try for a misdemeanor, are charged with,—what?"—and continuing in a low, heavy, solemn tone—"for preaching the gospel of the Son of God!" Pausing, amidst the most profound silence and breathless astonishment, he slowly waved the paper three times around his head, when, lifting his hands and eyes to heaven, with peculiar and impressive energy, he exclaimed, "Great God!" The exclamation—the action—the burst of feeling from the audience, were all overpowering. Mr. Henry resumed: "May it please your worships. In a day like this, when truth is about to burst her fetters—when mankind are about to be aroused to claim their natural and inalienable rights—when the yoke of oppression that has reached the wilderness

of America, and the unnatural alliance of ecclesiastical and civil power, are about to be dissevered—at such a period, liberty—liberty of conscience—is about to awake from her slumberings and inquire into the reason of such charges as I find exhibited here to-day in this indictment.” Another fearful pause, while the speaker alternately cast his sharp, piercing eyes on the court and the prisoners—and resumed: “If I am not deceived, according to the contents of the paper I now hold in my hand, these men are accused of ‘preaching the gospel of the Son of God’—Great God!” Another long pause, while he again waved the indictment around his head,—while a deeper impression was made on the auditory. Resuming his speech, he continued—“May it please your worships, there are periods in the history of man, when corruption and depravity have so long debased the human character, that man sinks under the weight of the oppressor’s hand and becomes his servile, his abject slave; he licks the hand that smites him; he bows in passive obedience to the mandates of the despot, and in this state of servility he receives his fetters of perpetual bondage. But, may it please your worships, such a day has passed away! From that period, when our fathers left the land of their nativity for settlement in these American wilds—for LIBERTY—for civil and religious liberty—for liberty of conscience—to worship his Creator according to his conceptions of heaven’s revealed will; from the moment he placed his foot on the American continent, and in the deeply imbedded forests sought an asylum from persecution and tyranny—from that moment, despotism was crushed; her fetters of darkness were broken, and heaven decreed that man should be free—free to worship God according to the Bible. Were it not for this, in vain have been the efforts and sacrifices of the colonists; in vain were all their sufferings and bloodshed to subjugate this new world, if we, their offspring, must still be oppressed and persecuted. But, may it please your worships, permit me to inquire once more, for what are these men about to be tried? This paper says, ‘For preaching the gospel of the Son of God.’—Great God! For preaching the gospel of the Saviour to Adam’s fallen race.” And in tones of thunder he exclaimed: “WHAT LAW HAVE THEY VIOLATED?” While, for the third time, in a slow, dignified manner, he lifted his eyes to heaven and waved the indictment around his head. The court and audience were now

wrought up to the most intense pitch of excitement. The face of the prosecuting attorney was pallid and ghastly, and he appeared unconscious that his whole frame was agitated with alarm; while the judge, in a tremulous voice, put an end to the scene, now becoming excessively painful, by the authoritative declaration, "*Sheriff*, discharge those men."

Such is the testimony of Dr. Peck as to the origin and the form of Mr. Henry's speech. There is nothing in his statement to show that he ever claimed to be its author, but, on the contrary, he tells us most distinctly that he obtained from Mr. Hinde "the outline of the speech"; and, as may be seen, the speech itself is a mere "outline." Mr. Hinde says, that he obtained his facts from Messrs. Bennett and Ficklin, "who were in the court-house and heard Henry, and narrated the speech" to him, which he "preserved in manuscript," from which Dr. Peck copied it.

But it is said that some of the sentiments of the speech are not such as a *Virginia* lawyer would be likely to make—that they sound more like the utterances of a New Englander. In reply it may be said, that lawyers at that day, as they are at the present time, were accustomed to seize upon every salient point, and take every advantage the case might present. As a true orator—one of the most gifted that America has ever produced—Henry would most *naturally* refer to the *res gestae*—the great question of civil and religious liberty, which the Baptists, as a class, were the first to agitate in Virginia. And when filled with his subject, and realizing the nature of the crime for which his clients were being tried, it would seem that he could not fail to have uttered just such words as are attributed to him. In the language of Semple, as previously quoted, "May his name descend to posterity with unsullied honor."

Philadelphia, Penn.

It would be a pity to spoil so interesting a story as the above, if truth were not better than fiction. There is only one point at issue between our correspondent and ourselves. It is conceded that John Waller, Lewis Craig, and other Baptist ministers, were imprisoned in Fredericksburg for preaching the gospel; and it is probable, though no contemporary historian mentions the fact, that Patrick Henry appeared in court and made an eloquent speech in their

behalf; but is the speech taken by our correspondent from the *Baptist Memorial* that speech? On this question we join issue with him.

Our correspondent seems to yield the point before he commences its discussion. "Perhaps," he says, "the words were not the same which he (Henry) uttered—nay, they could not be, for it was not in the power of mortal man to record his words." Then, at best, we have his speech, without the words he uttered. A curious speech this! Still, in the absence of *his* words, we may have, in the *words of another*, the substance of Henry's speech. Whose words are they?

Let us trace their history. Thos. H. Hinde (afterward Rev.), left Virginia, his native State, in his boyhood,—at what time it does not appear. It is not claimed for him, nor is it probable, that he heard Henry's speech. His knowledge of it was derived from tradition, or such documents as came in his way. The speech was published by Dr. Peck in 1845. Twenty-five years before that time—that is, about the year 1820, or fifty-two years after the delivery of the speech—Mr. Hinde returned to his native State, and "gathered the facts from the old men then living. Of these, he refers particularly to the statements of Mr. Bartlett Bennett and Mr. William Ficklin, *who were in the court-house and heard Henry, and narrated the speech, which Mr. Hinde*" preserved "*in manuscript.*" These octogenarians, more than fifty years after they heard the speech, *narrated*, did not read it to Mr. Hinde, and he preserved it in manuscript; that is, he wrote down, as best he could, what these venerable narrators told him of the speech. That he could have learned from his informers, or have put on paper, the speech of Henry in language, form, or substance is incredible. If Dr. Peck did not write the speech, then Mr. Hinde wrote it. The latter, it seems, was a man of industry, care and tenacious memory, and his writings and collections were voluminous. It does not appear, however, that he wrote for the press; and it is unlikely that he should have taxed his ingenuity to write a fictitious speech for Patrick Henry. Dr. Peck, on the other hand, was fond of writing, wrote for the press, and was ready to employ every stirring incident to impart interest to his articles. That, availing himself of Mr. Hinde's manuscript, he should have put into the mouth of Henry such a speech as, under the circumstances, he

supposed the great orator might have delivered, is far less improbable than that Mr. Hinde wrote it.

We come now to the examination of the speech itself. It contains internal evidence that it was not spoken by Henry. We quote from the speech: "From that period, when our fathers left the land of their nativity for the settlement in these American wilds—for liberty—for civil and religious liberty—for liberty of conscience," &c. Now this is precisely such language as we constantly hear from the lips, and read from the pens of New Englanders; but it has never been used by a Virginian. The Virginia colonists did not come to this continent to secure either civil or religious liberty. They were loyal to the English government and supporters of the English hierarchy. But says our correspondent, who is himself a lawyer, "Henry would most naturally refer to the *res gestae*—the great question of civil and religious liberty, which the Baptists, as a class, were the first to agitate in Virginia." That Henry, in such a speech, should have referred to the rights of conscience and the value of religious liberty, was quite in harmony with the merits of his case and his adroitness as a lawyer; but that he said "our fathers left the land of their nativity—for liberty—civil and religious liberty," was to affirm what the court, and every intelligent person present, knew to be false. It is what a Puritan, under similar circumstances, would have said, and said truly; but what a Virginian could not have said, without exposing himself to ridicule.

As to the source from which Mr. Sands derived his information concerning the authorship of the pseudo-Henry speech, we know nothing. His information on such matters was usually very accurate. Our recollection that Dr. Peck told us that he was the author of the speech has not been confused or weakened by the ingenious and able argument of our legal correspondent for its genuineness. We cannot remember the time, place, circumstances, or language of the communication; but we have a distinct and ineffaceable impression that Dr. Peck claimed to be the author of the speech.

Our reasoning and testimony on the subject, however, are of little moment. The story has got into the current of history, and will probably descend to the latest time. It is worthy to be true. Something like it is true. It has as much truth in it, we presume, as many statements that pass under

the name of history. We have very little confidence in the truth of history. It is made up largely from imperfect information, of garbled statements, shaped and colored by the training, principles, aims and prejudices of its authors.

We repeat, that on whatever principle Dr. Peck justified his course, he considered it no violation of historical fidelity; and he was, we presume, influenced simply by a desire to preserve something like the speech of Henry, and to impart interest to a magazine article.

Editors *Herald*.

In the above account of this incident, by Dr. Horatio Gates Jones, it is stated that it was "the judge" who, "in tremulous voice, put an end to the scene, now becoming excessively painful, by the authoritative declaration, 'Sheriff, discharge those men'."

These persecuted preachers usually appeared not before a *judge* but before a tribunal composed of "Gentlemen Justices," and it so happens that in this particular case, as well as many others, the names of the Justices have been preserved. There were three of them: Larkin Chew, Wm. Smith and John Carter. Thus it would appear that the mention of a judge in connection with the trial would simply be another bit of evidence to prove this speech a fabrication.

As late as November 8, 1928, there was an editorial in the *Religious Herald* about this much-discussed subject, as follows:

"An Old Fake Revived"

"It is singular how a 'fake,' when once it gets into circulation, though its falsity may be exposed over and over again, will continue to crop out.

"An instance of this is found in the publication in a number of our Baptist papers (the last in which we observed it

* Semple, in his history of the Virginia Baptists, after referring to the persecutions and imprisonments which the early ministers were called to endure, and of their unremitting exertions to obtain liberty of conscience, says (p. 24): "It was in making these attempts that they were so fortunate as to interest in their behalf the celebrated Patrick Henry; being always the friend of Liberty, he only needed to be informed of their oppression; without hesitation, he stepped forward to their relief. From that time, until their complete emancipation from the shackles of tyranny, the Baptists found in Patrick Henry an unwavering friend. May his name descend to posterity with unsullied honor." Dr. Benedict, in his history, Vol. 2, p. 75, merely quotes the above statement of Semple.

was our neighbor, the *Baptist Courier*) of Patrick Henry's alleged speech made before the Spottsylvania Court on the occasion of the trial of certain Baptist preachers. The simple fact is that there is some doubt as to whether Henry even appeared in the case, though it is probable that he did. The speech itself, as it is printed, is a fabrication. There is not available, so far as we know, in any existing record the slightest justification for assuming this to have been Patrick Henry's utterance.

"We asked our friend, Judge Daniel Grinnan, who is keenly interested in all these historical matters, to look into it a little and give us the result of his own inquiry. In response to our request, he sends us this note and promises to go into the matter a little more fully later on. It is disheartening to think that no matter how fully we go into it now or later, after a little while some enterprising editor will forget all about the correction and will print again 'Peck's Invention' as an authoritative report of Mr. Henry's deliverance.

" 'Dear Dr. Pitt.—I did receive from you the page of the *Baptist Courier* of October 25, 1928, with your note on the margin. Just what happened in 1768 at the trial of Walker, Craig and Childs before the County Court of Spottsylvania county for illegal preaching is, of course, interesting.

" 'It is not improbable that Patrick Henry appeared before the court in their defense, but the supposed speech that he delivered on the occasion is fabulous. In Semple's *History of the Baptist* (edition by Beale, published in 1894 by Pitt & Dickinson), at page 32, there is a footnote that throws doubt on Henry's appearance at the trial and states that his alleged speech is merely Peck's invention long after the occurrence. Semple's *History* is a most excellent and reliable work, as you know. In W. W. Henry's *Life of Patrick Henry*, Volume I, page 119, is the statement that Patrick Henry doubtless appeared at the trial, but that his speech on the occasion is a subsequent invention and the author refers to a footnote to Foote's *Sketches of Virginia* and to *Religious Herald* of February 28, 1871.

" 'Patrick Henry must have had no occasion to make a speech in view of John Blair's letter quoted by Semple.

The old order book of the court should throw light on the subject.

“With Kind regards,

Daniel Grinnan’.”

Dr. R. E. E. Harkness, Department of History of Christianity, Crozer Theological Seminary, calls attention to two strong points of internal evidence against Patrick Henry ever making such a speech :

“First, the indictment was supposedly a condemnation against ‘Preaching the Gospel of the Son of God.’ No indictment ever carried that phrase, it simply was against preaching contrary to the law of the land or the established order.

“Secondly, Patrick Henry is made to say ‘when the yoke of oppression that has reached the wilderness of America and the unnatural alliance of ecclesiastical and civil powers, are about to be dissevered.’ Such a statement is in itself post-factual, no man in America ever spoke or thought in such terms in 1768, only when such a separation of church and state had been consummated could anyone have used such an expression’.” (Quoted from a letter to the author, dated July 23, 1935.)

In Hon. John T. Goolrick’s *Historic Fredericksburg* (1922), on page 174, there is a paragraph about the Baptist church in that city which contains a brief reference to this remote incident :

“Very little credence has been put in the old superstition that an inauspicious beginning implies the promise of a good ending, but the Baptist Church here is a conspicuous example of the truth of the old saying :

“In 1768 three Baptist zealots were imprisoned here on two charges: ‘for preaching the gospel contrary to law’ and, to use the words of the attorney bringing the second charge, ‘May it please your worships, these men cannot meet a man upon the road, but they must ram a text of Scripture down his throat.’ But this intrepid trio continued to preach their doctrine, and to sing their hymns from the grated doors and windows of their cells, and each day drew crowds of awed and interested listeners.”

Our Baptist historians have been content to give as the reason for their arrest and incarceration the claim that they "preached the gospel contrary to law," but Mr. Goolrick's legal training and analytical mind made him separate the offense into two charges: first, "preaching the gospel contrary to law," and second, ramming texts of Scripture down the throats of men they met on the highway.

This Fredericksburg imprisonment in 1768 has claimed the attention of many scribes, as the above quotations show, but it is now necessary to turn our attention to other men and to the persecution they endured.

JOSEPH CRAIG

*Apprehended by Virtue of a Warrant, But He
Slipped Off His Horse and Escaped*

Another instance of persecution in Spotsylvania County has been preserved in Semple's *History* (1810), page 156. It occurred at a church by the name of Guinea's Bridge, so-called from its nearness to a bridge of that name. It was a "church of high-standing, having a number of pious and worthy members. The gospel was preached here, in its power and purity, at an early date after the rise of the Baptists." The time of this incident has not been preserved, but continuing Dr. Semple's account we learn that:

"At one time, several preachers were apprehended, by virtue of a warrant from a magistrate: Among them was Joseph Craig, remarkable for his eccentric manners. On their way to the magistrate's house, Mr. Craig thinking it *no dishonour to cheat the devil*, as he termed it, slipped off the horse, and took to the bushes. They hunted him with dogs, but Asahel like, being light of foot, he made good his retreat."

John Taylor, in his *History of Ten Baptist Churches*, on page 231, while speaking of the eccentricities of Joseph Craig, gives this bit of personal testimony:

"I will name a few instances of his singularity. I do not recollect, though a zealous preacher, that his persecutors

ever got him into prison; he had a method to baffle them. He was once preaching at a place, and the officers came after him; stepping out at a back door, he ran into a swamp supposing he was safe, but they took his track with a gang of dogs; to evade the dogs he betook himself to a tree, from which his pursuers shook him down, as if he was a wild beast, and demanded his going with them to Court. After reasoning with them a while, he refused to go; but they forced him on a horse, and perhaps tied his hands. On the way he reasoned thus: Good men ought not go to prison, and if you will put so good a man as Jo. Craig in prison, I will have no hand in it—and threw himself off of the horse, and would neither ride nor walk; behaving perhaps as David did, before Achish, King of Gath—I Sam. 21 c. 10 v. they let him go. His odd course was expressed, in called me the Ass' colt, his master rode to Jerusalem."

Joseph Craig may have been less conspicuous than his two brothers, Lewis and Elijah, but he was nevertheless a true hero. As Lewis Craig's assistant at Upper-Spotsylvania church he was among those who suffered persecution for righteousness's sake. According to Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), pages 91-92:

"He does not appear to have risen high as an expounder of the Scriptures, or even as a preacher. Much itinerant labor, however, was performed by him, and not without success. After preaching for some years in Virginia, he settled with his brothers in Kentucky, and continued there to exercise his ministerial functions.

* * * * *

"Mr. Craig was small of stature, stooping shoulders, of a hardy complexion, active in business, persevering as a traveling preacher, or rather exhorter, for in that lay his greatest gift. He died of a lingering complaint, after laboring in the ministry, say fifty-nine years. His age was nearly eighty."

During the same year of these Spotsylvania imprisonments there was that peculiar case of persecution of a Baptist in Orange County, to which reference has been made. Elijah Morton was

dislodged from his position as a Justice of the Peace, because of his Baptist proclivities. This was a rather drastic move, but what else were the authorities to do, when, to paraphrase the saying of the masters of the damsel in Biblical times who was noted for her soothsaying:

“These men, being Baptists, do exceedingly trouble our community,

“And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Churchmen.”

This Orange incident and one that occurred four years later, which will be mentioned in its chronological order, are the only cases mentioned in Mr. W. W. Scott's *History of Orange County, Virginia*, as having taken place in that county. This work was published in 1907, and on page 51 the author states that:

“These are the only items of note in the records as to the treatment of dissenters by the court.”

The mere absence of Court Records is insufficient to prove that the Baptists were not persecuted in Orange County. There are many well authenticated cases in other counties where no records can be found of the persecution encountered by our Baptist forefathers (and the same may be true of Orange County), but they nevertheless suffered many indignities. If the escutcheon of Orange County was never soiled by the infliction of this mode of punishment upon innocent and inoffensive preachers (as Mr. Scott's *History* would have us believe), it would indeed seem strange that Mr. Madison had worn himself out squabbling and scolding and abusing and ridiculing until he had lost all patience in the matter. Who was it that he scolded, abused and ridiculed? The citizens of some other county? Surely not. If his own county was so singularly free from guilt did he not go far afield to exercise his vocal powers upon other counties? Why not simply point to the clean sheet of Orange County in this respect and urge her example as being worthy of emulation? Example is always more efficacious than precept.

JAMES MADISON'S INDIGNANT COMMENT ON THIS PRACTICE
OF IMPRISONING BAPTIST PREACHERS

Mr. Madison in writing from his home in this county of Orange, to his college friend, William Bradford, in Philadelphia, refers to the imprisonment of Baptist preachers in an adjoining county at that very time, and said:

"I have neither patience to hear, talk, or think of anything relative to this matter; for I have squabbled and scolded, abused and ridiculed so long about it, to little purpose, that I am without common patience." (*History of the Life and Times of James Madison*, by Wm. C. Rives (1859), Vol. I, p. 44.)

Court records, or no court records, Orange County was not exempt from the fanaticism of that period. Baptist dissenters were not exposed, in every part of the State, to the same measure of persecution. In some extensive regions, they were exempt from all legal molestation. But "The county in which Mr. Madison resided," says Rives' *Life and Times of James Madison*, page 46, "seems to have been in a particular manner, the focus in which the scorching rays of persecution were converged, and directed, with their intensest heat against this devoted sect. No wonder, then that he should have been deeply outraged by such a spectacle, and that contrasting it, as he naturally did, with the general peace and happiness of the colony in which his friend lived, and where the principle of universal and unlimited freedom of religion had been established from the first, he should have taken a somewhat gloomy and desponding view of the state of society in his native land."

But Mr. Madison did not confine himself to writing about this inhuman treatment, for we are told that he *repeatedly appeared in the court of his own county to defend the Baptist nonconformists*. The authority for this statement is found in the following quotation from Johnson's *New Universal Cyclopaedia* (1876), Vol. III, page 201. After stating that James Madison graduated from the College of New Jersey at Princeton in 1771, he returned to his home in Orange County, Virginia, where:

"His attention was then absorbed by the impending struggle for independence, with which was closely connected in

Virginia a local controversy on the subject of religious toleration. The Church of England was the established state religion in the Old Dominion, and other denominations labored under serious disabilities, the enforcement of which was rightly or wrongly characterized by them as persecution. Madison took a prominent stand in behalf of the removal of all disabilities, *repeatedly appearing in the court of his own county to defend the Baptist nonconformists*, was elected from Orange co. to the Virginia convention in the spring of 1776, and signalized the beginning of his public career by procuring the passage of an amendment to the Declaration of Rights as prepared by George Mason, substituting for the term 'toleration' a more emphatic assertion of 'religious liberty'."

Surely the foregoing statements are incontrovertible evidence that the inhabitants of Orange County were not only inclined to persecute the Baptists, but that they did so. In the first place let it be observed that public opinion in that community had sufficient strength to retard the progress of any movement fostered by dissenters. We know that Elder Harriss was disgracefully treated by the populace in Orange County as early as 1765, and that there is no account extant of the strong arm of the law being interposed in his behalf, also that David Thomas met with such severe opposition in Orange that he refrained from coming into the county as often as it was desired and extended his labors into other and adjacent counties.

In the second place let us consider a specific case of imprisonment in Orange County, which Mr. Scott's *History* states is not sustained by the court records.

*Elijah Craig Imprisoned in Orange County for
17 or 18 Days*

This imprisonment seems to have occurred in the summer of 1768. Elijah Craig was one of those whom Elder Samuel Harriss encouraged in 1765 to exercise the gift that was in him. Taking this advice he began to hold meetings from house to house during the week and in his own tobacco-house on Sunday. He was the first pastor of old Blue Run church, which was situated about midway between Liberty Mills and Barboursville. This church

was constituted in 1769, and became the mother of many churches for miles around. It is not probable that so flaming an evangel as Elijah Craig would be overlooked by both civil and ecclesiastical courts. No date is given in Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, first series (1860), page 66, of Elijah Craig's imprisonment in Culpeper County jail for one month, after which he adds this sentence:

"He was also confined in Orange jail, at another time."

Mr. Scott's *History of Orange County, Virginia*, has this to say on page 178, with reference to Dr. Taylor's statement quoted above:

"In Dr. Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, it is stated that Mr. Craig was imprisoned in both Culpeper and Orange. The Orange records do not sustain this statement."

It so happens that Dr. Taylor's reference to these imprisonments of Elijah Craig is a *verbatim et literatim* statement of Dr. R. B. Semple, who was a contemporary of Elijah Craig, and that the statement may be found in his *History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists of Virginia*, on pages 415 and 416. This work was published in 1810, or just two years after the death of Elijah Craig. Dr. Semple's account is so carefully written and contains so many minute details that it seems highly improbable that the facts were obtained from any other source than from Elijah Craig himself. Here is Dr. Semple's account:

"He was certainly a great blessing to Bluerun church: for under his care they flourished. He was accounted a preacher of considerable talents for that day; which, united to his zeal, honoured him with the attention of his persecutors. They sent the sheriff and posse after him, when at his plough. He was taken and carried before three magistrates of Culpeper. They, without hearing arguments pro or con, ordered him to jail. At court, he, with others, was arraigned. One of the lawyers told the court, they had better discharge them; for that oppressing them, would rather advance, than retard them. He said, that they were like a bed of camomile; the more they were trod, the more they would spread. The court thought otherwise, and determined to imprison them. Some of the court were of opinion that they ought to be

confined in a close dungeon: but the majority were for giving them the bounds. Mr. Craig says they were fed on rye bread and water, to the injury of their health. After staying there one month, preaching to all who came, he gave bond for good behaviour, and came out. He was also confined in Orange jail, at another time."

Now notice some of the details mentioned in this account. It states the occupation in which Mr. Craig was engaged when the sheriff came to arrest him; mentions the fact that this officer was accompanied by a posse; specifically states the number of magistrates who sat in the case; includes the information that he was not tried alone, but that other ministers were arraigned before the court at the same time; refers to a lawyer's speech that was made in their defense in which he admonished the court against oppressing dissenters, and even gives a simile that he used in enforcing his arguments; mentions the division of the court as to the degree of punishment that ought to be inflicted upon them; gives the duration of his imprisonment; tells how he obtained his release; and also quotes Mr. Craig as saying, "They were fed on rye bread and water, to the injury of their health."

A statement so minute and graphic would seem to indicate that Dr. Semple's information was derived from an original source, not second-hand and the conclusion is irresistible that Dr. Semple knew what he was writing about. Probably the facts were obtained by Dr. Semple from Elder Craig himself; if, not, then certainly they were furnished by some one who was fully conversant with them even down to the most minute details. It would either be the height of absurdity, or an evidence of a complete lack of faith in human credibility to accept this full statement about Mr. Craig's Culpeper experience, and deny the one about Orange, for coupled with this authoritative account is that other reference to the Orange County episode, which says, "He (Mr. Craig), was also confined in Orange jail, at another time." There is no interposing clause to indicate that the source of Dr. Semple's information for the last statement was from a different or less trustworthy one than the former. So we are compelled to accept or reject both. United they stand, or divided they fall.

Then, too, let this fact be borne in mind, that we have no court record for the arrest and commitment of a number of these men. Their names do not appear on the record until they have been brought before the court and tried, and sentenced to be remanded to jail, or give bond for their good behaviour. Hence, in these cases we have no way of knowing just how long they were in jail before the court convened to try them. So we conclude that it is plausible to believe that some men were imprisoned and then set free without being brought before the court for trial. Then the failure of the clerk to record the case, and even the loss of the court's records after they were recorded would in no way invalidate the imprisonment of any preachers that might have been incarcerated in the jail of Orange County. Also it was not always customary to record their release from prison, for frequently the authorities relented, became ashamed of themselves, and contrived in some way to have these men liberated as quietly as possible. There is a tradition that the authorities tried to release John Waller from the Fredericksburg jail at night, but that he absolutely refused to go until broad day-light. In the case of Joseph Anthony, history states that the keeper of the Chesterfield jail was instructed to leave the jail door unlocked and then to leave the door wide open, hoping that he would slip out quietly, but Mr. Anthony chose to remain. So the preponderance of evidence is, we believe, on the side of our Baptist historians when they state that Elijah Craig was imprisoned in Orange County gaol.

But there is an earlier source of information which furnishes additional evidence that there were imprisonments in Orange County. Morgan Edwards visited Virginia in 1771 and 1772 collecting first-hand information about the Baptists in this State for the purpose of writing their history. This history was never written, but his manuscript notes are in the possession of Crozer Theological Seminary, at Chester, Pennsylvania. In the Virginia Baptist Historical Society's rooms, in Richmond, Virginia, there is a copy of these *Notes*, and on page 27 of this copy, under the head of "Elijah Craig," Mr. Edwards has recorded:

"He was a plowman. Put in Orange goal for 17 or 18 days in 1768 but released."

In Morgan Edwards' *Volumes*, page 39, under the head of Rapid-ann church, of which Elijah Craig was the pastor, he gives this additional information about Elder Craig's imprisonment in Orange County:

ELIJAH CRAIG

*Confined in Inner Dungeon of Orange Gaol, with No
Opening Save a Hole in the Door*

"He was in goal at Orange for a considerable time in 1768 preaching through the bars to the people who resorted to the prison till he was confined to the inner dungeon where was no opening save a hole in the door through which he received his bread and water."

Now let it be kept in mind that all of Morgan Edwards's material was gathered while the practice of imprisoning for preaching the gospel was in full swing, and not many years afterwards. His notes shed a ray of light on many of the old records of Colonial Virginia, just as the above quotations supplement the Orange records.

The official record of other imprisonments in Orange County may be found in the Order Book of that county for the years 1763-1769. On page 514 this court record may be found:

ALLEN WYLEY, JOHN CORBLEY
ELIJAH CRAIG, THOMAS CHAMBERS

Duration of Imprisonment in Orange Gaol Unknown

"At a Court held for Orange County on Thursday the 28th day of July, 1768.

		Rowland Thomas				Zack Burnley
		Reuben Daniel				Wm. Moore Gent
		James Walker				Jonny Scott
*	*	*	*	*	*	*

"This day Allan Wiley, John Corbley, Elijah Craig and Thomas Chambers in Discharge of their Recognizance Entered into before Rowland Thomas Gent on being charged as Vagrant and Itinerant Persons and for Assem-

bling themselves unlawfully at Sundry Times and Places Under the Denomination of Anabaptists and for Teaching & preaching Schismatick Doctrines Whereupon the Court having Examined the Witnesses and heard the Counsel on both Sides are of the Opinion that the sd. Allen Wiley, John Corbley, Elijah Craig and Thomas Chambers are Guilty of a Breach of Good Behaviour and Ordered that they Enter into Bond each in the sum of £50 and two Securities in the Sum of £25 Each to be of Good behaviour until the 25th of October next and in case they fail to Enter into Such Bond as aforesaid that Each of Them so failing Shall be Committed to Gaol Until the Same Shall be performed."

Now Morgan Edwards's notation agrees with the Court record as to the year, 1768, and we must conclude that Elijah Craig went to jail rather than give the bond required by the "Gentlemen Justices." Then too these notes confirm the court record concerning another of these men mentioned in this Court Order. When speaking of Wm. Fristoe, on page 32, Mr. Edwards says: "He has to his assistance Allen Wyley," and placing an asterisk after Mr. Wyley's name calls attention to a foot-note, which reads, "He was in goal in Orange." Also Morgan Edwards's *Volumes*, page 11, gives under the head of the Potomac church the following corroborating testimony:

"The minister Rev. William Fristoe, who has to his assistant Mr. Allen Willey; this Wileley has been in prison for some time at Orange for the testimony of Jesus."

These brief recorded facts about these two men, Elijah Craig and Allen Wyley, lead us to believe that not only did *they* go to jail, but *all four* men named in the Court's Order of July 28, 1768, did likewise rather than give the bond specified in that order. This mode of procedure was the prevailing custom of those early Baptist preachers. Some of them had conscientious scruples about giving bond; and many of them, not rich in this world's goods, might not have been able to meet such an obligation and therefore were compelled to refrain from it. However, there is no evidence, up to the present time, as to the course pursued by the other two preachers, John Corbley and Thomas Chambers, and therefore the positive statement can not be made

that they did not give bond and avoid imprisonment. Both Dr. Taylor and Dr. Semple state that John Corbley was imprisoned in Culpeper County and they both state that it was "probably previous to 1770." Dr. Semple's account is on page 428 of the 1810 edition of his *History*, and is as follows:

JOHN CORBLEY

In Culpeper Gaol for a Considerable Time

"John Corbley, was a native of Ireland; and while a boy, agreed to serve four years for his passage to Pennsylvania. When his time expired, he came to Virginia, and settled in or near Culpeper; where he became a convert to true religion, under the ministry of James Ireland. After his conversion, he became so noted, that the enemies of the cross considered him worthy of a prison. He was accordingly put into Culpeper jail, where he staid a considerable time. The exact year in which he was imprisoned, is not known; but it was probably previous to 1770; for in 1769 he was a delegate from Mountain Run church in Culpeper, to the Ketocton Association; and acted as clerk of the association. His name does not appear on the minutes again, until 1775; when he comes as a representative of a church called Goshen, in Redstone settlement, Pennsylvania."

Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), page 108, is somewhat fuller in details and indicates that the source of his information was probably more trustworthy than Dr. Semple's:

JOHN CORBLEY

*Frequently Taken from the Pulpit, Cruelly Beaten,
and Dragged from Place to Place*

"John Corbley was born in Great Britian in 1733, and while a boy agreed to serve four years for his passage to Pennsylvania. When his time expired he removed to Winchester, Virginia, and ultimately to Berkeley County; here in a conversation with Elder Garrard, he was awakened to a sense of his lost condition. He was baptized by Mr. Garrard, and began to preach. Becoming conspicuous as a leader among the Baptists, the enemies of religion considered him worthy of a prison. He was accordingly put in Culpeper

jail, where he stayed a considerable time. He was regularly in the habit of preaching, from the windows of his prison, the gospel of peace. After his liberation he suffered in various methods, being often threatened with death. Not unfrequently was he taken from the pulpit and cruelly beaten, after having been dragged from place to place. The exact year in which he was imprisoned is not known, but it was probably previous to 1770, for in 1769 he was a delegate from Mountain Run church, in Culpeper, to the Ketocton Association, and acted as their clerk. His name does not appear on the minutes again until 1775, when he comes as the representative of a church called Goshen, in Redstone Settlement, Pennsylvania. It appears that he had removed there several years previous to this, and in conjunction with Isaac Sutton, had planted the first three or four churches in the Redstone Settlement."

The author thinks that it has been conclusively proven that Allen Wyley and Elijah Craig did go to jail in Orange County, on July 28, 1768, instead of giving bond; and he is also prepared to believe that John Corbley accompanied them. Then, if these three men steadfastly refused to comply with the Court's order which in conscience they could not do, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the other man presented and tried at the same time—Thomas Chambers—followed their example and was shut up in Orange gaol.

Following the general plan of trying to conclude the reference to each imprisoned and persecuted preacher with a few brief facts about his last days and where he is buried, the following reference to John Corbley is appended. After his return to Pennsylvania, which has been noted, he is said to have been imprisoned on the charge of complicity in the "Whiskey Insurrection," and also suffered the frightful affliction of having his wife and several children brutally murdered by the Indians while they were on their way to church, and within less than a half mile from his dwelling. Mr. Corbley was perhaps saved from a similar death by being compelled to return to his home for his Bible which had been forgotten. The Indian attack came during his absence, and the fearful discovery was made by him upon his return. His last days are thus described in Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), pages 109 and 110:

"He was sick but a short time previous to his decease. On the 9th of June, 1803, the day of his death, he had an appointment to preach; but being ill, his brethren and friends met at his dwelling, when, as well as he could, he addressed them. A few minutes previous to his departure he asked for his hymn-book, read, and sang a few lines. Thus this man of God ended his ministerial labors, leaving this world in the triumphs of faith. A large connection of relatives and bretheren in Christ survived to lament their loss,—but their loss was his gain. His funeral sermon was preached by Elder David Phillips, from Rev. XIV, 13: 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the spirit, that they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.' He was buried with the following inscription on his tombstone:

"Death, thou has conquered me;
I by thy dart am slain;
But Jesus Christ shall conquer thee,
And I shall rise again."

Allen Wyley was a consecrated layman of Culpeper County, who was largely responsible for the introduction of the Baptists into that community, and it was he who went to Fauquier for Elder David Thomas, and later to Pittsylvania County for Elder Samuel Harriss, bringing them to that community to preach. Later he removed his membership from a church in Orange County, and was one of the constituent members of the Potomack church, in Stafford County, which was organized March 26, 1771. Rev. William Fristoe was the pastor, and Allen Wyley is named as his assistant.

No account of his ordination appears and it is probable that he was simply an exhorter. Semple's *History* was published in 1810, and the author has this footnote on page 7 of that work with reference to this man who was in the group tried in Orange County on July 28, 1768:

"Mr. Wiley is now living, and furnished from under his own hand the above account. He has maintained ever since an upright character, as a zealous and pious professor."

Further reference to Elijah Craig and the closing scenes of his life will be given after the account of his Culpeper imprisonment.

THOMAS CHAMBERS

*Imprisoned in Orange County**Duration of Imprisonment Unknown*

The fourth man in this group who was presented, tried and imprisoned, in Orange County, was Thomas Chambers; but who he was, where he was from, where he preached, or anything further about his life is unknown to this author. He may have been just another of those consecrated laymen who fell into the toils of the law because of his association with the preachers.

AMELIA COUNTY

County Seat—Amelia C. H.

Perhaps the Baptists in Amelia County had heard of the presentments that had been brought against their brethren in May, 1768, in Orange County, of the imprisonments in June, in Spotsylvania County, and of those in July, in Orange County. They may have sought therefore to forestall any entanglements with the civil or ecclesiastical authorities in Amelia County, by obtaining their consent to "George Walton's house as a place for those dissenters called Separate Baptists to assemble and preach in"; so they drew up a petition on October 27, 1768, and presented it "To the worshipful Court of Amelia." But their petition was rejected as will appear from the story of the Nottoway church, which was constituted in 1769.

CHAPTER VIII

1769

AMELIA PETITION FOR A PLACE TO WORSHIP GOD—
REJECTED

The next attempt of the Orange County authorities to persecute the Baptists seems to have occurred on May 25, 1769, when the grand jury presented two preachers for "preaching from place to place." The record of this instance of persecution may be found on page one of the Orange County Order Book for 1769-1777, and reads as follows:

ANDREW TRIBBLE AND THOMAS MASTIN

Presented by the Grand Jury

"Also we present Andrew Tribble and Thomas Mastin for preaching from place to place contrary to the Law and without License within Twelve months past. Ordered that the Sheriff summons the above mentioned persons to appear at the next court to be held for this County to Answer the sd. Presentments."

Who and what Thomas Mastin was, investigation does not disclose, but "Andrew Tribble was a son of George Tribble, of Caroline County, where he was born in March, 1741. He became an early member of Thompson's (Goldmine) church, in Louisa county," says Beale's *Semple*, page 72. From the same source we learn that he was a messenger from the Louisa church in 1771 to the First session of the Virginia Separate Baptist Association. At this time he was assistant to David Thompson at the Louisa church, but seems not to have been ordained until 1777 when he was called to the pastorate of the Albemarle church. So he must have been only a zealous layman at the time he was presented by the Orange County grand jury in 1769.

The *Religious Herald*, of July 16, 1925, contains an article from Rev. Eldridge B. Hatcher, D. D., in which this incident in the life of Elder Andrew Tribble is related:

"The story is told in the *Christian Watchman* by a minister who received the account of the incident from the Baptist pastor with whom Jefferson had the conversation. The minister was Rev. Dr. Fishback, of Lexington, Ky., and he wrote this story in the *Christian Watchman*:

"Mr. Editor: The following circumstances, which occurred in the State of Virginia relative to Mr. Jefferson, were detailed to me by elder Andrew Tribble about six years ago, who since died about ninety-two or ninety-three years old. The facts may interest some of your readers.

"Andrew Tribble was the parson of a small Baptist church which held monthly meetings at a short distance from the Jefferson home nine or ten years before the American Revolution. Mr. Jefferson attended the meeting of the church several months in succession and after one of them asked Elder Tribble to go home and dine with him, with which he complied. Mr. Tribble asked Mr. Jefferson how he was pleased with their church government. Mr. Jefferson replied that it struck him with great force and had interested him much, that he considered it the only form of pure democracy that then existed in the world and had concluded that it would be the best plan of government for the American colonies. This was several years before the Declaration of Independence'."

The church referred to in the above must have been the Albemarle Baptist Church, the oldest Baptist church in the county, which, according to custom was named after the county in which it was located. This church was constituted in 1773 and was originally an arm of Blue Run church, in Orange County. The church worshipped for some years in Lewis's meeting-house, about one and a half miles from Charlottesville, being variously known as Buck Mountain, then Earlysville, and now as Chestnut Grove.

BIRTCH-CREEK

Constituted October 16, 1769

On October 16, 1769 (see Morgan Edwards's manuscript *Notes*, page 2), the Birtch-creek church was constituted with twenty members dismissed from the Pignutridge church for that

purpose. The Birtch-creek church was situated on a prong of the Dan River, in Pittsylvania County, and consisted of "2 branches: one at Birtch-creek where is a meeting house, 20 feet by 16, built in 1769, on land given by Thomas Dodson: the other at Winns-creek about 15 miles off where is a house, 24 feet by 20, built in 1771, on land given by Thomas Burgess."

The minister was Rev. Thomas Creels, who was baptized by Rev. David Gutton and ordained by Rev. David Thomas. He married Rosanna Dodson, some of whose kinsmen were the assistant pastors.

CARTER'S RUN

Constituted November 12, 1769

Great Opposition from Mobs and Magistrates

Carter's Run church was constituted by Elders Samuel Harriss and James Ireland. The church was planted by John Picket who continued to be pastor until his death. Morgan Edwards's *Volumes*, page 45, give this brief comment on the troubles they encountered:

"Remarkables (1) They endured great opposition from mobs and magistrates; the former breaking into the meeting house and doing the most slovenly things, tearing their pulpit and communion table in pieces; and the other imprisoning some of their principal men. viz. James Ireland, Wm. Maclanahan &c. At their meetings the mob were pretty quiet, chiefly owing to the presence of Mr. Maclanahan who is a most robust man, and has been a mighty buffer."

LOWER SPOTSYLVANIA OR "WALLERS"

Constituted December 2, 1769

The next church to be constituted, according to Mr. Edward's *Notes*, page 19, was Lower Spotsylvania church, or "Wallers," as it is now called.

"It consists of 4 branches: one near where is a meeting house 32 by 24 feet, built in 1769 on land given by James Wigglesworth; the other in Caroline; the third in Essex; and the fourth in Middlesex in two of which places is a meeting house."

Rev. John Waller was the first pastor, having been "Ordained June 20, 1770 by Sam Harris & Lewis Craig at which time he took on him the care of the church." Dr. Beale's *Semple*, page 197, in a footnote, states that, "The meeting-house of this church was situated about fourteen miles south-west of Spotsylvania Courthouse. The present (1894) house of worship, erected in 1874, occupies the original site. A former building was burned in 1873."

Morgan Edwards' *Volumes*, page 32, gives this bit of information relative to this church:

"No very remarkable event except a tumult which arose when the election of a minister came on, some preferring Chiles to Waller, and suppoting their interest by propeties & visions; several of these went off to the Quakers, particularly Kit Clark who is now a public friend among them, but not able to keep the proselytes he makes."

BLUE RUN

Constituted December 4, 1769

Blue Run church, in Orange County, was constituted on the 4th of December, 1769, in a community which was among the earliest places in which the Gospel, through the labours of Messrs. Harriss and Reed, took effect and was at the first under the pastoral care of Elijah Craig. It was at this church that the First Separate Baptist Association in Virginia was held, with Samuel Harriss as Moderator and John Waller, Jr., as Clerk. "The present site of Blue Run meeting-house, six miles from Orange Courthouse, is three miles north of the original one. The former one was sold to the colored people in 1876." (Beale's *Semple*, p. 240.)

RAPID-ANN

Constituted December 4, 1769

*Suffered Much Opposition and the Imprisonment
of Their Preachers*

The Rapid-ann church was "So called from the south west branch of Rapahanock, in Orange county. * * * The meeting house is 40 feet by 20, built in 1769 on land given by major

Zachariah Burnley. * * * The minister Elijah Craig who has to his assistants mess Austin. Easting. * * *

"No very remarkable event, except the usual opposition of mobs and the imprisonment of their preachers. The said Mr. Easting was in Chesterfield goal the 15th of May last. When our ministers were in this prison before they preached through the bars. But col. C—— hath surrounded the prison with a high wall in order to prevent it.

"They originated from Upper-Spotsylvania whereof they had been a branch to Dec. 4, 1769, and then were constituted into a distinct church by means of Rev. S. Harris." (Morgan Edwards's *Volumes*, pp. 38, 39.)

It was the pastor of this church, Elijah Craig, who was imprisoned in the Orange jail and preached to all who came to hear him until the authorities put a stop to it by confining him in the inner dungeon where there was no opening save a hole in the door through which he received his bread and water. He was also honored with two commitments to the gaol of Culpeper, one lasting for a month's time and the duration of the other being unknown.

LITTLE NOTTOWAY

Constituted December 10, 1769

Little Nottoway was the next church to be constituted. According to Mr. Edwards's *Notes*, page 16, it was "So called from a river of the same name near to which the meeting house stands, in Amelia county." * * * "these 66 persons were Dec. 10, 1769 constituted into a church by means of Sam Harris and Dutton Lane. (1) This is a mother church, Meherrin, Dinwiddie and Cumberland being the offspring. The first minister is the present Rev. Jeremiah Walker."

Baptist Petition for a Place to Worship in Amelia County Heard and Rejected

Nor did this church come into being without opposition. More than a year before, its organizers had petitioned the court for a licensed place in which to meet, but their petition was rejected. This petition is still in existence and may be found among the

To the Hon^{ble} & Right Hon^{ble} Council of Amelia. 27th Oct^r 1768

We the Subscribers, do humbly
 pray that your wisdom would favour us as far as to
 give a place for those who are called Baptists to preach
 Licensed George Walton's House ~~for the purpose of~~
 & preach in. Therefore humbly submit the Consideration
 to your Hon^{ble} Council, hoping you will in mercy grant
 us the same, so we may be enabled to preach
 for all Authorities under God and over us —

Concord Walton
 George Walton
 John Thomas Dejernatt
 Tho^s Dobson
 John Fowlkes
 Joseph Fowlkes
 Thomas Fowlkes
 Samuel Thomson
 Charles Anderson
 James Anderson
 David Ellington
 David Thomson
 John Jennings
 Alexander Bickley
 William Gray
 Joseph Gray
 William Gray
 Lucy Anderson
 Josiah Peace
 Agnes Walton
 Elizabeth Walton
 Sarah Fowlkes
 Ann Thomson

Stephen Beav
 Aaron Beav
 William Dejean
 James Hines
 Tipton Walton
 Thomas Walton
 Mary Beav
 James Griffin
 Joseph Jennings

[On the reverse of this
 manuscript the following
 appears:

"Dissenters Pet.
 Call^d Baptists

Rejected.

24th. Nov^r 1768"

THE ORIGINAL PETITION FROM AMELIA COUNTY
 FOR A PLACE FOR BAPTIST WORSHIP

Colonial Papers at Amelia Courthouse. A photostatic copy of it may be found among the illustrations in this volume. It follows:

“TO THE WORSHIPFUL COURT OF AMELIA,

27th Oct., 1768.

“We the subscribers do humbly pray that your worships would favor us so far as to license George Walton’s house as a place for those dissenters called Separate Baptists to assemble and preach in.

“Therefore humbly submit the consideration to your worships, hoping you will in mercy grant the same, to us who are in duty bound to always pray for all authorities under God and over us.

Simeon Walton
George Walton
John Thos. Dejarnatt
Thos. Dodson
John Fowkles
Joseph Fowkles
Thomas Fowkles
Samuel Thomson
Charles Anderson
James Anderson
David Ellington
David Thompson
John Jennings
Alexander Berkley
Alex Guy
Joseph Guy
Milly Guy
Lucy Anderson
Josiah Peace
Agnes Walton
Elizabeth Walton
Sarah Fowlkes
Ann Thomson

Stephen Peace
Newsom Peace
Millisant Dejarnatt
James Hines
Jesse Walton
Amos Walton
Mary Anthony
James Griffin
Joseph Jennings.”

On the back of this petition is the following endorsement:

“Dissenters petition called Baptist,

Rejected.

24th Nov. 1768.”

This petition is mentioned in the official Order Book of Amelia County for the years 1767-1768. On page 350 the following reference is made to it on November 24, 1768:

“The petition of Geo. Walton and sundry other inhabitants of this county for a place of meeting for the religious sect called Separate Baptist was heard and rejected.”

Although the church was constituted the next year, opposition continued. On page 18 of his manuscript *Notes*, Mr. Edwards has this interesting account of the early opposition with which Jeremiah Walker, the pastor of this Nottoway church, met in Lunenburg County:

JEREMIAH WALKER

*Sued in Two Actions in Lunenburg County for
Baptizing Two Boys*

"In 1769 he was sued in two actions at the court of Lunenburg for baptizing Henry and Bryan Lester by the father. The ground was, that they were underage—but the father withdrew the actions upon a friends offering to pay the expense."

In Mr. Edwards's *Volumes*, page 31, is a slightly different version of this incident:

"One Lester brought against him two actions in Lunenburg court for baptizing his sons; the plea was that the youths were non-age. The father withdrew the actions, but threw the cost on Walker."

One of these "youths," Henry Lester, became a prominent preacher in the Appomattox Association. Semple's *History* (1810), page 212, under the head of Ash Camp church, has this reference to him and his work:

"Ash Camp is a young but prosperous church. It was raised under the ministerial labours of Rev. Henry Lester, who was their pastor until 1808. He then moved to the western country.

* * * * *

"Mr. Lester embraced religion, at a very early period of the rise of the Baptists, and when about 18 years of age. He soon began to preach and was acceptable as a young preacher. Marrying however when quite young, his ministerial labours were somewhat curtailed. He continued still to blow the gospel trumpet, but not to such extent as some who were less entangled with the affairs of this life. He is

now (1809) about 57 years of age, of good constitution, &c. In point of talents as a preacher, Mr. Lester may be considered as occupying a respectable grade."

Previous to the year 1772 Jeremiah Walker extended his labors down the Virginia peninsula, preaching among the people who afterwards formed the James City church, which was located in the upper part of James City County. Dr. Semple's *History*, page 114 (1810 edition), states that he was "much opposed by the parson of the parish and others," and that "his preaching was not effectual."

CHAPTER IX

1769

JAMES IRELAND IMPRISONED IN CULPEPER COUNTY JAIL

CULPEPER COUNTY

County Seat—Culpeper

JAMES IRELAND

We now come to what may be regarded as the most noted case of imprisonment during that trying period of our denominational history, that of James Ireland in Culpeper jail. Certainly it is the one that has gained the widest publicity, but this may be due largely to the fact that he is the only one in that long list of persecuted preachers who left an autobiography. Mr. Ireland's story does not pretend to be a complete enumeration of all the forms of persecution he suffered, but it contains far more than any other account which has been preserved of these men.

It is greatly to be deplored that he did not give names and dates in his narrative, but, as it was dictated hurriedly while upon his death bed, perhaps it was a practical impossibility for him to do otherwise. Suffering as he was, and realizing that the day of his dissolution was fast approaching he seems to have hurried on through the story in order to set down and preserve the main facts of his eventful career. There is no way of learning from his narrative even the year in which he suffered imprisonment in Culpeper jail and all the attending indignities incident thereto, except by connecting this event in his life with another event in which he had a prominent part. The imprisonment has been placed by some in 1768, by others in 1770, but this author inclines to 1769 as the date, and for the following reasons. Mr. Ireland mentions Lord Botetourt as the "then Governor of Virginia," and Lord Botetourt was commissioned Governor-in-chief of Virginia in July 1768; reaching Virginia the following October and served until his death, which occurred October 15, 1770. So Mr. Ireland's visit to Williamsburg, which came immediately *after* he gave bond and came out of prison, was between October 1768

and October 1770. Fortunately we have more definite information than that to consider. We have Mr. Ireland's own statement to the effect that he was on his way back from Fauquier County when he was arrested and thrown into prison. He had gone to that county to assist in the organization of Carter's Run church. Now, when was this church constituted? Morgan Edwards's *Notes*, page 31, state that the Carter's Run church was constituted during the month of "November 1768." Dr. Taylor's biographical sketch of John Picket (the pastor of Carter's Run), states that the church was constituted on November 12, 1768." All this is so clear and full that we hesitate to bring it into question, but in some way an error of one year seems to have crept into the record, for be it remembered that James Ireland bears testimony to the fact that it was *after* he had witnessed the ordination of Elder Samuel Harriss, in North Carolina, and returned to Elder Harriss's home in Pittsylvania, that Elder Harriss baptized him—his first candidate. Further James Ireland commenting on Elder Harriss's ordination says: "I saw him ordained, and a moving time it was." Now when was Samuel Harriss ordained? Morgan Edwards's *Volumes*, page 23, contains this account of Elder Harriss:

"He was baptized and joined Dutton Lane's church. (Dan River.) In this church he was first ordained a ruling elder 1759); then an evangelist, Oct. 11, 1769; but now confines himself chiefly to the care of Fallcreek church."

Notice that Samuel Harriss's ordination as an evangelist was on "Oct. 11, 1769." James Ireland's baptism and ordination was at Falls-creek church *after* they had returned to Pittsylvania from North Carolina. And it was also *after* James Ireland's return to his home from Pittsylvania that he spent a few days with his Smith's Creek friends prior to starting out to help in the organization of Carter's Run. If we accept the date of the month as accurate and change only the year, we shall have the date of constitution, "November 12, 1769." So it seems perfectly clear that James Ireland's arrest and confinement in Culpeper jail began during the last half of November, in the year 1769.

James Ireland was born in Edinburg, Scotland, came to America when a young man and settled in the northern part of Virginia. He said of himself that he was educated for the law and

carefully "instructed in the principles of the Gospel according to the Presbyterian plan," but he added it pleased God to make him acquainted with "vital religion and the way of salvation through the dear Redeemer."

About the time of his entrance upon the Baptist ministry he had a remarkable dream which he thus describes on page 123 of his autobiography :

"I shall give an account of a most remarkable dream I had, the accomplishment of which I shortly after saw and experienced in every circumstance thereof; and were it necessary, I could have the same established by living witnesses, to whom I immediately communicated the dream, and who also know how it was accomplished.

"One night I dreamed I was taken prisoner by a man mounted on a red horse, who carried me over two mountains, there being considerable distance between them; when descending the ridges of the second, he conducted me along edging to the right, about two fifths of the whole distance from whence I was taken. I was then led into an old field, where several buildings were erected on our right, but in none of them was I to reside. I was conducted some distance into the field, and deposited in a little old open house, wherein I entered to remain a prisoner until by prayer and supplication, and other necessary methods, I was to be relieved and delivered therefrom.

"There were certain circumstances to take place, and duties to be performed before my imprisonment was to take place. I saw I had a lengthy journey to perform, which lay in a southerly direction from that old field; I pursued my journey and arrived at the place intended; but unforeseen obstacles lay in the way, when I got there, which prevented the accomplishment of my purpose at that place. I saw now, that to accomplish my purpose, I had to go a certain distance in a westerly direction, which I accordingly did, and there appeared to me a large house which they called a church; I walked three times round its outside, and then went in at the door.

"Immediately after this, I journeyed again, and traveled through beautiful walks, gentle and delectable risings, rocky and cold valleys, sometimes in water and sometimes on land, until I came to a beautiful building above, called my Father's house. And then I awoke. But the impression it made upon

my mind was a lasting one, nor could it be eradicated therefrom.

"I communicated it to some of my confidential friends immediately; and I realized (reflected) upon it, to see what might reasonably be inferred from it. I inferred therefrom, that there were some particular trials awaiting me, that I would be subjected to in the sequel.

"It being a persecuting time in our then colony of Virginia, and particularly so against the society with whom I soon after joined. I knew that the man on the red horse, spoken of in Revelations 6th and 4th, denoted persecution; but in what character, I should suffer, I knew not then, though I had the woeful experience of it afterwards, which will be stated in the proper place."

The failure of an itinerant preacher, John Picket, to keep his appointment was the occasion for James Ireland's first sermon. The hymn they sang began with these words, "Let me hear my Saviour say," and Ireland says that it was "expressive of the real exercise of my heart." He preached from John 3:3: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "In addressing the congregation," says Mr. Ireland, "my heart was greatly enlarged, my zeal inflamed, and my desires running out after the salvation of souls in such manner that I have often thought, that had I had twenty tongues to have employed that day, I should have had subject matter for them all to improve from. I dare say but I had some sweet thoughts that God would raise me perhaps to the ministry; but against them I struggled, and would not give them entertainment in my heart under the apprehension that they were the productions of pride."

That sermon preached under such unusual circumstances was blessed of God to both preacher and hearers. Later when Ireland learned that Elder John Picket, whose appointment he had filled, was announced to preach about forty miles away he journeyed forth to hear him. This service was held at Capt. Thomas M'Clannahan's, in Culpeper County, and in connection with it he explains the practice of those who opposed the Baptists in that county at that time in the following:

"The Church Parson in Culpeper County had made it a practice, where any of those Baptist preachers would have

an appointment for preaching, to go in person to those meetings, taking some aids with him, who were as much prejudiced against that sect as he was. Being a man of rapid flow of mis-representation and persecution, upon religious subjects, would by his dogmatical manner, appear frequently to an audience he would address, to gain his point and acquire the mastery over his opponents.

"This personage attended at Capt. M'Clannagan's in order to detect the falsity of Mr. Picket's doctrines before his parishioners. Being acquainted with Mr. Picket's disposition and turn of mind, I felt very uneasy that day, when I saw the position the Parson took. The place Mr. Picket was to preach in, was pretty capacious for the congregation; the parson had a chair brought for himself, which he placed three or four yards in front of Mr. Picket, on which he seated himself, taking out his pen, ink and paper, to take down notes of what he conceived to be false doctrine. By the countenance of Parson Meldrum's Parishioners, they appeared to be highly elated, under an assured expectation of his baffling the new light, as they called him. I discovered it was some embarrassment to Mr. Picket, and impeded his delivery, but I possessed a confidence that he preached the truth, and nothing but the truth, which could be supported and defended against its enemies.

"As soon as Mr. Pickett had finished his discourse, the Parson called him a schismatic, a broacher of false doctrines, and that he held up damnable errors that day. Mr. Pickett answered him with a great deal of candour, and supported the doctrines he had advanced, to the satisfaction of all those who were impartial judges of doctrine. He was a man slow in argument, and when contradicted it would in a measure confuse him, which I soon observed, by some points he advanced, in which, in my judgment, he was perfectly right. The Parson at the same time, I observed, was taking notes of what the other said, which made me careful to retain it on my memory, standing close by Mr. Pickett when he spoke. The notes the Parson took, were absolutely the reverse of what Mr. Pickett delivered, and the Parson asserting them with dogmaitcal precision, and his parishioners exulting in the same, I could not forbear immediately interfering.

"I addressed the Parson to this effect, 'Sir, I presume you will grant the privilege of other's hearing and determining

as well as yourself; I have got eyes to see, ears to hear, and a judgment to determine with others. With respect to those remarks you have made, upon what you say Mr. Pickett asserted, they are of no avail; he did not say those things with which you charge him, and in justification of what I assert, I could freely appeal to others.' He wheeled about on his chair towards me, and let out a broadside of his eloquence, with an expectation, no doubt, that he would confound me with the first fire. I gently laid hold of a chair, and placed myself upon it close by him, determined to argue the point with him from end to end."

The fight was on and the argument continued for sometime, without any appreciable results for either side, until Mr. Ireland discovered that to pursue it further would be at "the risque of incurring the displeasure of both gentlemen and ladies of his society," and so he brought the dispute to a close. But he met with opposition from another source which he thus describes:

"I immediately got up and addressed one of the gentlemen who had been so officious in helping his teacher; he was a magistrate at that time, and one of those who afterwards committed me to prison. I addressed him in this manner, 'Sir, as the dispute between the Parson and myself is ended, if you are disposed to argue the subject over again, I am willing to enter upon it with you.' He stretched out his arm straight before him, at that instant, and declared I should not come nigher than that length. I concluded what the consequence would be, therefore made a peaceable retreat."

This action on the part of Mr. Ireland in locking horns with Parson Meldrum was all the more courageous when we remember that the Parson of that day was held in very high esteem and that resistance to him was the same as resisting an officer of the law.

Mr. Ireland continued to preach in his own neighborhood as the occasion presented itself, "but he would not," as he says, "admit the idea of the name Preacher, to associate itself with my performance: the word Preacher being too great and sounding a title for me to assume."

About this time a union of the two Baptist bodies known as Regulars and Separates was being urged. Mr. Ireland's associ-

ates at Smith's Creek believed in immersion only as baptism while Ireland himself clung to sprinkling as practiced by the Presbyterians. This caused a "degree of trouble and anxiety," and was the occasion of "many prayers on my behalf, in order that I might be convinced of my error in this respect." The final result is given in his own words:

"Discovering the uneasiness that existed among them led me to search the scriptures impartially, and in a short time it pleased God to remove the scales from my eyes, and give me to see that I must be a partaker of the grace of faith in Christ before I could be regularly intitled, as a subject, to an ordinance of his instituting. The application was very powerful, so that nothing could eradicate it from my heart until I had manifested my obedience to Christ by following him into the water, and submitting to his ordinance of baptism, and then putting him on professionally."

Mr. Ireland and the members of the Smith's Creek society determined to unite with the Separate Baptists, but there was no ordained minister in Virginia to perform the ordinance of baptism for him. He was compelled to take a long journey from Virginia down into the State of North Carolina to receive the ordinance and to be ordained. An association was to convene at Elder Shubal Stearns's church, Sandy Creek, and Mr. Ireland determined to attend it, because of the solicitations of his friends at Smiths Creek and because of his own sense of duty. In the pursuit of his journey he pressed his horse so hard that the poor animal gave out in Amelia County. An entire stranger with whom he lodged was so impressed with the young man's earnestness and the mission on which he was bent, that he persuaded one of his neighbors to trade horses with Mr. Ireland so he could pursue his journey. At this juncture of his story Mr. Ireland again refers to his most remarkable dream and describes how he visited the very jail in which he was afterwards confined:

"The reader must recollect my remarkable dream about being taken prisoner &c. This dream seemed evidently to be fulfilled in this journey—Never having travelled this rout or course before, I was singularly impressed with my dream, and more especially when I took a retrospect, that I was conducted over two mountains (masanotin and blew ridge*

* Massanutten and Blue Ridge Mountains.

I had to cross in this journey) until I came to the little old field, being so admirably calculated to the view I had in my sleep, long before I bore publick testimony in preaching the gospel. When I had in fact to pass through the little old field, on my way south-ward, I was forcibly struck with the appearance of every thing there, agreeing so well with what I saw in my vision. I looked for the little house I was to be imprisoned in, and saw it in a direction agreeable to my dream. Curiosity prompted me to leave the main road and ride out to it, and look in at a small window, secured with small grates, under a full persuasion, that I should be brought to suffer persecution, and that *that* small apartment would be the place of my confinement in future. Under these impressions I left the little limbo."

Samuel Harriss Ordained

James Ireland Baptized

Mr. Ireland proceeded on his journey to North Carolina, but there being so much business before the Association, neither time nor opportunity was found for his baptizing. A way, however, was opened for him by going to Elder Samuel Harriss's in Pittsylvania County. Elder Harriss had been exercising his gifts for some time, but had previously refused ordination. During the Association in North Carolina, however, he was set apart to the regular work of the ministry and authorized to administer the ordinances of the church. This was in 1769 and James Ireland was to be his first candidate for baptism. With reference to Samuel Harriss's ordination Mr. Ireland states:

"He was a great favorite of the ministers in Virginia, and they had planned it among them, that I should be the first person he would baptize. I saw him ordained, and a moving time it was. He was considered a great man in the things of time and sense; but he shone more conspicuously in the horizon of the church, during the time of our sweet intercourse together, so that he was like another Paul among the churches. No man like minded with him, who like a blazing comet, would rush through the colony or state displaying the banners of his adorable master, spreading his light and diffusing his heat to the consolation of thousands."

Mr. Ireland describes very minutely how his baptism and ordination took place:

"Three days and greater part of the nights were employed in preaching to the people at Mr. Harris's; many of the hearers having come great distances. I occupied my part among the preachers. The third day, the whole body of the church went into their meeting house, and according to their rule, sat as a Church to hear experiences and receive subjects for baptism. I endeavored to make them acquainted with what I hoped the Lord had done for my soul, and with my desires of submitting to an ordinance, in the way that God himself had instituted it, and which Jesus Christ his son had sanctioned, when he came from Galilee to Jordan and was baptized of John therein, setting an example for his followers.

"After some short interrogations, only for the satisfaction and edification of the church, they gave me the right hand of fellowship, and declared me to be a proper subject for baptism. Next day in the afternoon, was appointed for the administration thereof; it being Sunday, we were to meet very early in the morning for preaching, eleven ministers being there with other inferior gifts. Considering the distance I lived from there, it was proposed among them, and acceded to, that I should preach my trial sermon, and obtain credentials. However, I was tried indeed, thinking they laid too great a burden upon me that day. They got four of their ablest ministers to preach before my lot took place; and being but a young soldier concluded I had not as many rounds as they to fire, that having generally preached in a constant manner through my journey, my ammunition must be nearly expended."

Behold the scene. There sat the young preacher awaiting his turn. The fourth preacher attempted a discourse on Christ dying for our offenses and rising for our justification, but he became confused and James Ireland pulled his coat tail and indicated that he would take his place.

"Divine service being over," says Mr. Ireland, "we repaired to the water for the administration of baptism. Mr. Jared was to open up the nature, end and design of the ordinance, and Mr. Harris was to administer the same,

which accordingly was done ; a solemn surrounding audience attended on the occasion. Next morning I had to take my leave of that church, and I obtained my credentials, signed by eleven ministers, in order to go forward as an itinerant preacher without any hesitation until further occasion.

“Here, in this journey, my remarkable dream kept opening up by its accomplishment. I saw therein that I was not to accomplish the business of my southern journey, where I first intended to do it, but had to take another rout to accomplish it. I saw a large house, which they called a church, round the outside of which I walked three times and then went in at the door. This last part appeared to be fulfilled in my being three days about Mr. Harris’s meeting house, and being received into the fellowship of the baptist church the third day in the afternoon, and accomplished all the purposes of my journey before I left there.”

On his way home Mr. Ireland preached at the meeting-house in Amelia County, where Jeremiah Walker was pastor, and passing through Spotsylvania he preached at the Baptist church there and found them “a warm and zealous people.”

“Next morning I proceeded on my way through Culpeper ; and when I passed the Court-House, was impressed in the same manner as formerly—rode out to the Jail, under the impression that I should certainly suffer persecution, and that the man on the red horse would deposit me there, although I did not expect it was so near at hand as it proved to be.”

Upon his return home Mr. Ireland went forth in the spirit and power of his Master and devoted himself to the great work of preaching the gospel. The Lord added many seals to his ministry. But he soon found that bonds and imprisonment awaited him. His growing popularity and success excited the indignation of the rulers of the Established Church, and brought down upon his head fierce persecution.

JAMES IRELAND

Imprisoned in Culpeper Jail for Five Months

After a short stay with his Smith’s Creek friends Mr. Ireland set out in the fall of 1769 to aid Samuel Harriss in constituting a church at Carter’s Run in Fauquier County. On his way he

preached at Col. Pugh's, and lodged with Col. Tipton, who requested him to preach at his house on the return trip, whereupon Ireland modestly told him by that time he expected to be a prisoner for Christ in Culpeper jail. But let him take up the thread of his story at this point:

"The end and design of our meeting being accomplished at Carter's Run, I went on that evening to Capt. Thomas M'Clanahan's, a worthy gentleman at whose house I had the dispute with the church parson; there I was informed that if I preached the next day at Mr. Manifa's, I should be taken by squire Strother and squire Slaughter. I sat down and counted the cost, freedom or confinement, liberty or a prison; it admitted of no dispute. Having ventured all upon Christ, I determined to suffer all for him."

What ever else may be said of Mr. Ireland he was certainly not a "timid, disingenuous preacher of Christ" according to H. G. Salter's definition of such a Christian, in the following quotation:

"I have no notion of a timid, disingenuous professor of Christ. Such preachers and professors are like a rat playing at hide-and-seek behind a wainscot, who puts his head through a hole to see if the coast is clear, and ventures out if nobody is in the way; but slinks back again if danger appears. We cannot be honest to Christ except we are bold for him. He is either worth *all* we can lose for him, or he is worth nothing." (Spurgeon's *The Treasury of David*, Vol. II, p. 7.)

Mr. Ireland was certainly willing to venture *all* for his Master, for after being told that he would be arrested if he tried to preach the next day he did not falter:

"Next morning I sat off for Mr. Manifa's, at whose house I was to preach, accompanied with the capt. and his family. When I arrived at the place of preaching Mr. Manifa addressed me thus, 'Sir, you may expect to be taken up today, if you preach, a certain fine (I am told) will be imposed upon you, and so much upon each individual that will attend your preaching, as well as a fine of twenty pounds on me for granting you my house to preach in. This the

justices have made me acquainted with, and have advised me for my own advantage not to suffer the meeting.'

"Mr. Manifa being a man under awakening impressions, told me not to flinch from my duty, if I thought it a duty, to go on. I requested him to show me the line of his land, ordered a table to be taken out and placed with its feet on each side of the line; whether it might have answered any purpose or not, I cannot tell. However I told him, that when I stood on the table I would not preach on his land no more than on another.

JAMES IRELAND

*Seized by the Collar by Two Men While Praying
to Almighty God*

"Preaching being over, and I concluding with a prayer, heard a rustling noise in the woods, and before I opened my eyes to see who it was, I was seized by the collar by two men whilst standing on the table. Stepping down off the table, and beholding a number of others walking up, it produced a momentary confusion in me. The magistrates instantaneously demanded of me, what I was doing there with such a conventicle of people? I replied that I was preaching the Gospel of Christ to them. They asked me who gave me authority so to do? I answered, he that was the author of the Gospel, had a right to send forth whom he qualified to dispense it. They retorted upon me with abusive epithets, and then enquired of me if I had any authority from man to preach? I produced my credentials, but these would avail nothing, not being sanctioned and commissioned by the Bishop. They told me that I must give security not to teach, preach or exhort, for twelve months and a day, or go to jail. I chose the last alternative. The magistrates then addressed their neighbors and informed them that they were open to law, but there the preacher stands on one side, and here we stand on the other; and as we believe you have been deceived by him, if you will confess it by coming over from the side where he is, to our side, we will take that act as your concession, and the law will not be put in force against you. The people were much incensed against the magistrates, and told them that they heard nothing preached but the Gospel of Christ, and that if they had not money to pay

their fines, they were willing to go to jail also. The magistrates were much mortified at seeing the ill will they had got from their neighbours, and their ignorance being by me, at the same time exposed before the congregation.

"I gave security to attend court in a few days, which I accordingly did. By the complexion of the court I saw there was no liberty for me. There were eleven magistrates sat as a quorum. They brow-beat me, mall treated me, and throwed out the most approbrious appellations against me—would admit of no defence I could make, but ordered me to hold my tongue, and let them hear no more of my vile, pernicious, abhorrible, detestable, abominable, diabolical doctrines for they were naucious to the whole court. I found it of no consequence to defend myself any further, since imprisonment was inevitable, and they were determined to make an example of me.

"I delivered up my riding horse to a friend to take care of him that night, and apply to me next day for further instructions. The sheriffs were ordered to attend me to my little limbo, with a considerable parade of people, with such vollies of oaths and abuse as if I were a being unfit to exist on the earth. A very uncomfortable night I passed, in consequence of the oaths &c. that continued through the same. Sticks and stones they were throwing during the whole night upon me."

Mr. Ireland relates how grievous doubts came into his mind while in prison, with regard to his call to the ministry, etc. So dark was it that he sent for his friends intending to give bond for his liberation. But after conversing with them for a little while he relented and declared that he could not sign the bond, which gave them much joy. At length by the application of Scripture suitable to his case he became fully confirmed of his call to the ministry. He thus describes his sufferings while in prison:

JAMES IRELAND

*Four Shillings and Eight Pence the Price His Friends
Had to Pay to Visit Him While in Jail*

"The jailer being an avaricious person, and easily perceiving that he had majority of the people of note on his side, laid down and pursued the following plan, with respect to me. Finding I enjoyed the affections of those people called

the Baptists, who were very desirous of coming in to see me, and tarrying all night with me, he would admit none of them to the enjoyment of that favour, without paying four shillings and eight pence. He said they must come in as debtors, and go out as such released: and this sum he called commitment and releasement money. When he happened to have some unruly persons at his tavern whom he wished to get rid of, he would favor me with their company, without any expense, excepting that of suffering personal abuse from them; which some of them were not backward liberally to bestow. I have had to pay the sum more than once for a single individual in order to give them an opportunity to laying open to me the state of their souls.

"My friends round the Court House, supplied me amply with wood, it being an extreme cold winter, and a great demand for it. My wood was exhausted very fast, and I as often supplied. The Tavern-keeper (who was also Jailer) was obliged to furnish me with victuals, and water to drink; but my portion of the latter was scanty enough, in consequence of a scorching fever, which attended me in the night: and as to the former I had but little recourse to it, as I chiefly subsisted on what my kind friends sent me, or what I purchased with my own money.

*Horses Ridden at a Gallop over Those Attending
Ireland's Preaching from the Jail Window*

"When I would be preaching through the little iron grate, the wicked and persecutors would ride up at a gallop among my hearers, until I have seen persons of respectability under their horses feet: clubs have been shaken over the heads of other individuals, with threatenings if ever they attended there again: whilst the poor negroes have been stripped and subjected to stripes, and myself threatened with being shut up in total darkness if ever I presumed to preach to the people again.

*Miscreants on the Outside of the Jail Made Their
Water in Ireland's Face While He Was Preaching*

"To such a height of arrogance and wickedness have these miscreants went, that when I have been engaged in preaching the Gospel of my dear Redeemer to the people,

they have got a table, bench, or something else, stood upon it, and made their water in my face!

Attempt Made to Blow Ireland up with Gun Powder

"A number of my persecutors resorted at the tavern of a Mr. Steward at the Court House, there they plotted to blow me up with powder that night, as I was informed. The person employed to provide the materials, lived about twelve miles from there, and on whom the awful judgments of God was soon afterwards manifested, as will be seen, hereafter. All the powder they could collect (according to my information) was but half a pound: they had fixed it for explosion, but in this they were a little mistaken. Fire was put to it, and it went off with a considerable noise, forcing up a small plank, from which I received no damage. I was singing a hymn at the time the explosion went off, and continued singing until I finished it.

*Attempt Made to Suffocate Ireland with the Smoke of
Brimstone and Indian Pepper*

"The next scheme they pursued was to smoke me with brimstone and Indian peper. They had to wait certain opportunities to accomplish the same. The lower part of the jail door, was a few inches above it's sill; when the wind would be favorable they would get pods of indian peper, empty them of their natural contents, and fill them with brimstone, and set them a burning, so that the whole jail would be filled with the killing smoke, and oblige me to go to cracks, and put my mouth to them in order to prevent sufocation.

*A Conspiracy Between the Doctor and the Jailer
to Poison Mr. Ireland*

"At length a certain doctor and the jailer formed a scheme to poison me, which they actually effected, and which I could clearly demonstrate was it expedient, considering my present state, to enter into a full detail of the circumstances. I picked as much out of themselves; and the Physician who afterwards attended me on the occasion, declared it to be so, from the symptoms they saw on me.

*A Reward of Two Hundred Pounds Offered for
His Release and Restoration to His
Accumstomed Health*

"I was then to be highly favoured by my very enemies, (or rather they pretended so) being opposed to that avaricious gratification, arising from the four shillings and eight pence commitment fees, they enjoyed very little advantages from that quarter; but now I was to be a prisoner at large. I was to go to the doctor's house, (he was in Co. with the jailer) to live there, where every attention was to be paid to me, requisite and proper to my situation. Averice was at the bottom of this scheme, and I saw through it, and of consequence rejected it with horror. It originated through the affectionate desires of a few of my able friends on Shenandoah river, who in the tavern said: 'If there could be any person found, who might be instrumental in restoring me to my health again, and who would get me out among them, they would give two hundred pounds, for bringing about such a favour.' Being informed of this generous proposal, as soon as they came to the jail, I gently reproved them for it, and told them I could not come out upon any other terms, than what would comport with the honour of that cause for which I suffered.

*Threatened with a Public Whipping and Expected
It Every Court Day*

"Thus I have given some account of my personal sufferings, to which might be added a hundred circumstances more. Such as being threatened, and expecting every court to be brought out to the whipping post, and suffering there in a public manner, before the gazing multitude. I sat down and counted the cost, believing through Christ's strengthening me, I could suffer all things for his sake. It appears that their power did not reach so far, or it would have been executed.

*Drunken Rowdies Committed to the Same Cell
with Ireland*

"Some curious anecdotes transpired in this period, respecting men in a state of intoxication (that were abusive at the tavern, and to get clear of such company, they were

locked up with me) of their pretending to be religious when they came in, groaning and sighing, when they had no knowledge of what it was about; of the method I took to sober them, and when effected, the mode I pursued for their mortification and conviction. I must remark that these were not naturally of the abusive kind, that I had the company of, but were such as would thank me for my kindness to them, in the morning when they took their leave.

JAMES IRELAND

Dated His Letters, "From My Palace in Culpeper"

"At this period I received and returned a number of letters from and to the ministers of our persuasion, and from a variety of Churches, with whom I was connected. From these churches, I received information, how singularly these letters were under the kind dispensation of divine providence, blessed to the conversion of numbers of souls, who were anxiously led to enquire into the cause for which I proffered (suffered), as well as the grounds of that fortitude which bore me up under these sufferings. My prison then was a place in which I enjoyed much of the divine presence; a day seldom passed without some signal token and manifestation of the divine goodness towards me, which generally led me to subscribe my letters, to whom I wrote them, in these words, 'From my Palace in Culpeper.'"

James Ireland called his prison a "Palace," and the Italian Martyr, Algerius, dated his letters, "From the delectable orchard of Leonine prison." Any man whose conscience is "void of offense toward God, and toward men," can make himself comfortable in a prison and get more genuine joy out of it than some men derive from the comforts and cupboard of a palace, or the fragrant blossoms or delicious fruits of an orchard. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Phillippian Christians, from his prison in Rome, assuring them of his appreciation of "the things which they sent" and speaks of them as "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice, acceptable, well pleasing to God." But he also says: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." James Ireland had learned the same thing. He knew how to abound and how to be abased. He also felt like the Apostle when he said:

"I can do all things through Christ which strengthenth me." If the desert can be made to blossom as the rose, or to be like the garden of the Lord, where joy and gladness shall be found, with thanksgiving, and the voice of melody, why not a prison? That is exactly what that old Colonial prison in Culpeper County seems to have been to Mr. Ireland. He no doubt could have voiced the same sentiments attributed to Byron to "The Prison of Chillon," when he sang:

"With spiders I had friendship made,
And watched them in their sullen trade;
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learned to dwell."

But spiders and mice were not the only companions of Mr. Ireland while he was in prison. He was regaled by the silly antics and senseless speech of drunken wretches whose company had become unbearable to the guests at the Tavern. When they wished to get rid of an objectionable guest he was thrust out of the tavern and into the jail to keep Mr. Ireland company. In addition to the common drunkards who were thus thrown into company, he describes a burly Irishman who was "designed to be my steady companion, during the whole of my imprisonment." Mr. Ireland found this man in prison and describes him as follows:

"He was by birth a native of Ireland, by profession a Roman Catholick, stocked with as great a measure of ignorance, as ever I knew a man in my life. By stature he was of an enormous size, by look and aspect possessed every appearance as if he could with ease, and without the least remorse, according to their principle in former times, put a Heretick to death."

When he tried to escape and Mr. Ireland warned him that he would call the people, this man of herculean stature threatened to take his life. But by sharing his bed and board with him, teaching him the alphabet, buying him a New Testament and carefully instructing him in religious matters, Mr. Ireland com-

pletely won him, and he "bore a near affinity to Theophilus, Philemon's servant."

The accommodations in Culpeper jail were poor indeed, for Mr. Ireland was compelled to rent a "bed and furniture, at five dollars a month," while his companion lay at first "on a raw cow hide upon the floor, sustaining the cold air which had access to him from every direction, without a cover over him."

Mr. Ireland's account of the closing scenes of this imprisonment is as follows:

"Before I give an account of what immediately preceded and attended my final trial, (if it may be called by that name) and my releasement from prison, I shall give a short relation of two circumstances, that happened during my imprisonment.

"The first respects the person who went twelve miles one evening, as aforesaid, for the powder to blow me up, and on whom the judgments of God were manifested soon after. He with other two young men, went to the back woods to spend some time in hunting. As the three lay by the fire, with their feet towards it, there came up a mad wolfe, and although my persecutor lay in the middle, singled him out from the other two, bit him in the nose, of which bite he died in the most wretched situation of the hydrophobia, or canine madness.

JAMES IRELAND

*An Active Persecutor Transformed into a
Devoted Friend*

"The second circumstance was, my bringing over a most violent persecutor to be my friend, to-wit, the tavern keeper, at whose house the plot was laid for blowing me up, and who was himself one of those active persons in riding over the people and treading them under his horses feet. He, with a number of his accomplices, were at the jail window going on with their abusive language, when he applied to one of his companions for ten shillings, as he wanted some more necessities against court for the tavern. He could not obtain that small sum from any of them, although they were generally applied to. I stepped to the window with the money in my hand, and addressed him thus, 'Mr. Steward, I have heard you applying to your friends for ten shillings, and although

unapplied to, I rest in your honesty, here it is, if you will accept of it, and at any time hereafter when it suits you to return it, you may do so.' He accepted of it immediately, and struck with apparent astonishment and confusion, he made a kind of bow and retired.

"I perfectly gained him over to be my friend that instant, neither would he suffer any person to throw out a word of insult against me from that time, without his resenting it. He and his companion would repeatedly apply to the jailer for the key, in order to come in and visit me, at which times we often spent many hours together in friendly conversation.

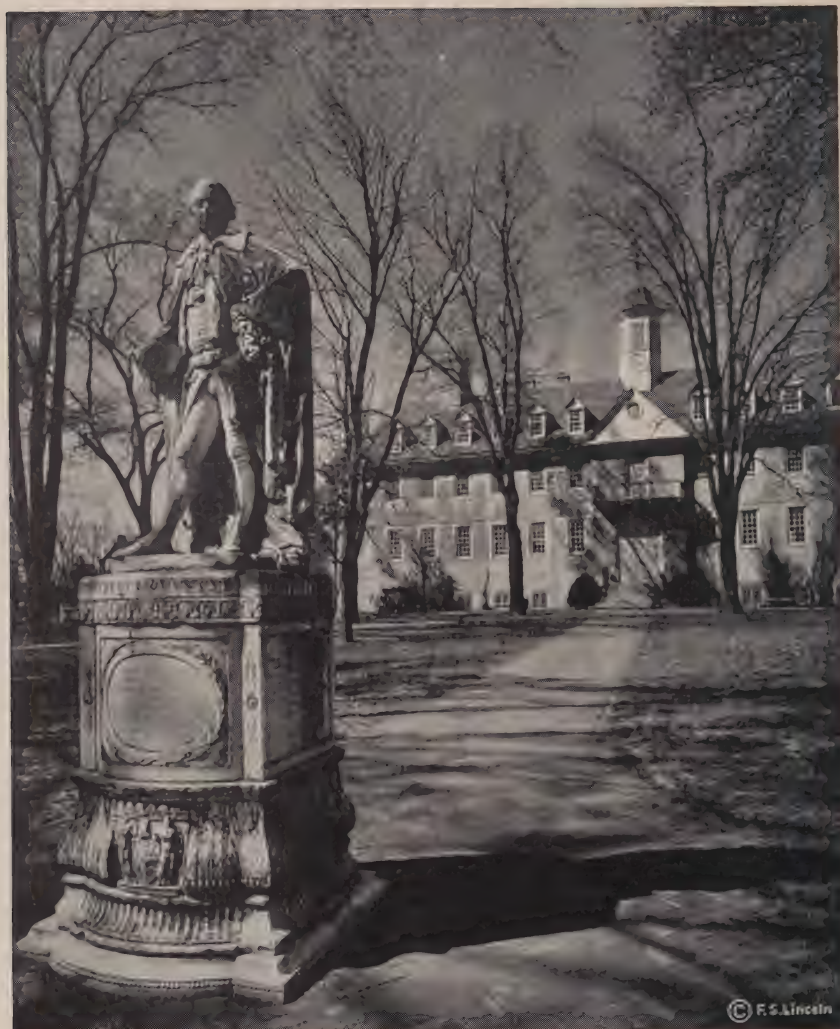
"As to my liberation from Prison, there need be but little said about it being some time early in April, and the time of my next trial being at grand jury court in May next, there was a great deal by me to be done between these periods, and but little time to do it in.

"The determination of the bench in Culpeper, was to prevent any from preaching in the county, as well as to continue me in prison, in case I did not conform to their terms, which I could not in conscience do. Having continued in jail as long as in my own and the judgment of a number of my religious friends, could be of any further usefulness, before the intended trial I sent for Elder Elijah Craig, and we gave our joint bond, for me to attend my trial at the next term, and so I came out."

If a disobedient prophet—I Kings 20:38—could be slain by a lion, why not a wicked persecutor by a wolf?

John Whitecross's *Anecdotes*, (1835), pages 145 and 146, give this summary of the awful manner in which a number of royal persecutors of the people of God came to their end:

"Persecutors, and others who have unjustly shed the blood of their fellow-creatures, have often, in the righteous Providence of God, met with a violent death, or been visited by signal judgments.—Nero was driven from his throne, and perceiving his life in danger, became his own executioner; Domitian was killed by his own servants; Hadrien died of a distressing disease, which was accompanied with great mental agony; Severus never prospered in his affairs after he persecuted the church, and was killed by the treachery of his son; Maximinus reigned but three years, and died a violent



Courtesy of the College of William and Mary

STATUE OF LORD BOTETOURT

Colonial Governor of Virginia who was kind to several Baptist preachers.

death; Decius was drowned in a marsh, and his body never found; Valerian was taken prisoner by the Persians, and, after enduring the horrors of captivity for several years, was flayed alive; Diocletian was compelled to resign his empire, and became insane; Maximianus Hercules was deprived of his government, and strangled; Maximianus Galerius was suddenly and awfully removed by death; and Severus committed suicide.

“Charles IX of France was a cruel and persecuting monarch (witness the massacre at Paris in 1572), and died in a very wretched state. He expired, bathed in his own blood, which burst from his veins, and in his last moments he exclaimed,—‘What blood!—what murders!—I know not where I am!—how will all this end?—what shall I do?—I am lost forever!—I know it!’”

As showing the religious oppression of that day and because it leads up to James Ireland’s trial the following is taken from his autobiography. But note first here was a man of reputable character, of good talents, and aiming to promote the well-being of society, who is compelled to take a long journey from Culpeper County to Williamsburg, in order that he might secure the privilege of preaching in public and of erecting a building in which he could worship Almighty God. The day after Mr. Ireland gave bond and was released from jail, perhaps early in April, 1770, he went up to Frederick County:

JAMES IRELAND

*Treated with Kindness and Courtesy by Lord Botetourt,
While the Clergy at the Colonial Capital Were
Shockingly Antagonistic*

“I went up to Frederick county, drew up a Petition, addressed to Lord Bottetourt, the then Governor of Virginia, praying him to grant me the privilege of having a meeting house built in Culpeper County, in order to preach at and in, without molestation, on condition of my conforming to the rules prescribed for protestant dissenters. To this I obtained the signature of a number of respectable inhabitants, both of Frederick and Culpeper counties.

“I repaired to the Capitol at Williamsburg; the Governor I understood was a religious man, and his universal conduct

was stamped with the approbation of all, both within and about his Capitol. Whether he possessed vital religion or not, I will not presume to determine; but he received my petition with all the graces of a gentleman, and gave me directions what measure to pursue, antecedent to granting the privileges I requested. I found the Clergy in the city to be of quite a different character from the Governor; they appeared obstinately determined not to give me the examination I had to undergo, every one shifted it upon another, till at last I obtained it from a county Parson, living eight miles from the Capitol, who gave me a certificate of the same. I then returned to the Capitol, and presented it to the Governor and Council, who granted me a license for those things petitioned for.

"I returned homeward, and with a number of friends attended on the day of trial at the court house. They had found a sham jury against me, determined still to continue me in prison. I was indicted for alleged crimes, which if proven, would have subjected me to criminal punishment. The King's attorney opened up the indictment, and then presumed to ask me, '*Guilty or not guilty.*' I answered *not guilty*; and declared that if five hundred witnesses were not sufficient, I could produce a thousand, to destroy the validity of what I was charged with. Finding them deaf to everything I could offer in my own defence, I then produced my license, signed by the first authority, to have a meeting house built in that county, for myself to preach there without molestation. Never was a people so chagrined as the bench of magistrates were; however, still they were determined to send me back to jail, and I had to give a friend the charge of my riding horse and furniture. One of my friends at that instant tapping me on the shoulder, asked me if I had any objections to employing an Attorney? I answered no, provided he would make good what he undertook. I immediately turned round to lawyer Bullett (since Judge Bullett), asked him if he would undertake my cause and ensure success? He answered in the affirmative. Five pounds (equal to \$16.66) being his fee, I agreed to give it.

"After a good deal of altercation between my Attorney and the Court, he told them plainly, 'that they had prosecuted me upon laws that had no existence these seventy years, that they subjected themselves to a prosecution on account of their conduct towards me, as those conventicle acts were

repealed at the accession of William the third to the throne of England, and had never an existence since.'

"The county Parson was very officious in giving his assistance to the bench, in the dilemma they were then in. I applied to Mr. Bullett to move the court to give the Parson and I leave to argue the point in hand before them, and if I did not confute him, I would go to prison as a volunteer! He, with a smile replied, 'The word of God does not pass current in this house?' I answered, 'It appeared so, or they would not imprison those who preached it.'

"By this time the confusion of the bench was conspicuous to all that were in the house; the judge of the quorum picked up his hat and went out of doors, another followed his example, until the whole of the magistrates evacuated the bench; and there did I stand like the woman accused of adultery, before Christ, who told them, that 'They who were without sin, should cast the first stone; when they all went out, being convicted, one by one.'

"The clerk of the court, in a sham, asked me if I would attend there again, when called for, knowing it was a thing that would never take place? Although I urged at the time, that the court should pursue their object, yet I consented to give them a visit again, when solicited by them, which never happened.

"Thus ended this great sham trial; to the mortification of the bench and their abettors; whilst on the other hand, the pious followers of the dear Redeemer were over-joyed at their disappointment, and the prospect of having a meeting house for themselves. Till the meeting house was erected, an arbour was set up, under the shelter of which, other travelling ministers attended and preached to the people in my absence; and this was the first means of the gospel being spread in that county, the happy and astonishing spread thereof, is now conspicuous to all in the county who are religiously disposed."

The "confusion" of the jury that tried Mr. Ireland suggests another historical case which proves how the grace of the Lord may enable even an illiterate woman to confound the mighty. It is quoted in Spurgeon's *The Treasury of David*, Vol. II, page 6:

"Alice Driver, martyr, at her examination put all the doctors to silence, so that they had not a word to say, but

one looked upon another; then she said, 'Have you no more to say? God be honoured, you be not able to resist the Spirit of God, in me, a poor woman. I was an honest man's daughter, never brought up at the University as you have been; but I have driven the plough many a time before my father, I thank God; yet, notwithstanding, in the defence of God's truth, and in the cause of my Master, Christ, by his grace I will set my foot against the foot of any of you all, in the maintenance and defence of the same; and if I had a thousand lives they should go for payment thereof.' So the Chancellor condemned her, and she returned to the prison joyful."

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," said the Psalmist; and God's people have always found it so. In Spurgeon's *The Treasury of David*, Vol. II, page 20, there is a quotation from Bishop Thomas Ken (1637-1710), which is so applicable it is included here:

"Stand but your ground, your ghostly foes will fly—
 Hell trembles at a heaven-directed eye;
 Choose rather to defend than to assail—
 Self-confidence will in the conflict fail:
 When you are challenged you may danger meet—
 True *courage* is a fixed, not sudden heat;
 Is always humble, lives in self-distrust,
 And will itself into no danger thrust.
 Devote yourself to God, and you will find
 God fights the battles of a will resigned.
 Love Jesus! love will no base fear endure—
 Love Jesus! and of conquest rest secure."

It would seem fitting to close this account with the comparison Mr. Ireland draws between his own experience and that of his brethren who also suffered in prison for the Gospel's sake:

"The prisons, in divers places, were honoured with the poor despised preachers: however their situations were much more comfortable than mine; because none were precluded from visiting them; none of those punishments inflicted on me attended them; whilst several of them at a time would be in company together, by which means, they proved a

mutual comfort and establishment to each other. By comparing their situation with mine already given, the reader may easily draw inferences from the premises."

Ireland's liberation from prison did not mean that all persecution against him had ceased. "When first liberated from prison," he says, "my heart glowed with a zeal for the glory of God, the honour of my dear Redeemer, the prosperity of religious societies, and the gathering in of souls to the Lord Jesus." But he remarks:

JAMES IRELAND

Opposition Attended Him Everywhere, Such as Shouts to Whip Him off the Ground, and Clinched Fists, etc.

JAMES IRELAND

Given a Ducking by Soldiers

"Opposition attended me every where; in the time of preaching, one body of the congregation would be calling out to the other to whip the fellow off the ground; half a dozen of fist would be drawn at a time, when I expected to be knocked down every minute; sailors were brought on shore from their vessels, through the influence of the people, in order to take me out into the stream, hoist me up to the yard arms and so to give me a ducking. At other places public teachers would, after sermon, introduce controversies, principally on the ordinance of baptism, which I would undertake accordingly to the mortification of those who introduced them; by which their congregations were convinced of the propriety of believing baptism by immersion."

The foregoing facts have been culled from *Elder James Ireland's Life*, which was "written by the author's amanuensis, while he was confined to his bed by sickness, from which he never recovered"; but several chapters have been added by an unknown compiler at the "pressing solicitation of James Ireland, eldest son of the deceased and the widow of the deceased." From these chapters the following statement is made, with which his narrative is concluded:

"He was certainly one among a thousand of the ministers of the Lord Jesus, who experienced the extremes of sorrow

and joy, of tribulation and comfort. That scripture, Psalm 136, 5th and 6th verses, surely would apply to him. 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.'

"He certainly sowed much of the seed of the gospel in weeping and tears, and gathered many precious sheaves of believers in much joy.

"And John 16th chap. and 23rd verse, 'In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world'."

In Dr. R. B. Semple's *History* (1810), pages 426 and 427, there is a sketch of James Ireland in which this comment on his imprisonment occurs:

"Mr. Ireland was a man of too much distinction to escape the notice of the enemies of the cross. He was often opposed, and frequently treated very roughly by them. He was once arrested while preaching, and thrown into Culpeper jail. While in close confinement, some of the more malignant burnt at the prison windows, red pepper or some kind of nauseous substance, with a view to suffocate him with the smoke. It almost cost him his life. Escaping, however, with his life, he never regained his constitution; being always subject to disordered bowels, and other distressing infirmities. Gracious heaven! that ever such a man as James Ireland should be so far in the power of such unprincipled miscreants! Mr. Ireland bore all the scoffs and buffetings of the ungodly, as a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus ought to do. He suffered with him here; and, doubtless, he now reigns with him in glory."

William Fristoe's *History*, pages 83 and 84, contains this reference to the imprisonment of Mr. Ireland:

"Another instance of cruelty we have to remind the reader of a Minister (though not belonging to our association at the same time, but soon after his confinement became a member with us) the same was apprehended, torn from the stand by violence in the time of prayer, and imprisoned; and such was the rage and malice of his persecutors, that a

close prison was thought too good. In addition to confinement those of the vulgar sort took occasion to collect disagreeable and ill-savored trash, nauseous combustibles, and burn them in the prison window which filled the close dungeon with smoke that made it difficult for him to breathe or support life; and in the event so impaired his health, though he lived many years after, he had to drag through life loaded with infirmity, distressing pains, disordered bowels, and a constitution throughout so affected and broken down, that made life often a burden."

According to his autobiography, James Ireland *wrote* many letters while in Culpeper jail, not one of which has been preserved, that this author has been able to find, after much search and many inquiries. Also only one letter that Ireland *received*, so far as is known, has been preserved, but that one is worthy the distinction this fact gives it. It was from Elder David Thomas, perhaps the most learned Baptist minister who laboured in Virginia during that early period, and is quoted in Mr. Ireland's autobiography on pages 169 and 170, as follows:

"Dear Brother,

"I am told that you are honoured with a prison, if it is for Christ, it is an honour indeed, but if for satan or self, a very great dishonour.

"I am informed that you not only preach Jesus as a Saviour, but as a Judge also, and for that reason must love you as a fellow labourer in the gospel. I have nothing at present for your consolation, for God has said enough in his word to comfort his people on all occasions, and I hope you are not without a bible, and if you are lead by the spirit of Christ, you then possess the same spirit of him who is the author of it.

"O brother, if you can, by bearing the charming lovely cross of Jesus Christ, win one of the strongest of Satan's strong holds, no matter then how soon you die, and if you thus die for him, how would the glorious armies of the Martyrs above, shout to see Ireland coming from a prison to reign with them in glory. He then concludes with assurances of his respect for me &c.

D. T."

David Thomas was a minister of much distinction in his day, but the opposition to the Baptists was so great in Culpeper County that he was not allowed to preach there, although invited by one of the county's citizens. He doubtless had reference to this county, and must have felt very keenly the rebuff he received there to be able to write, that it was "no matter" how soon a man died, if he could succeed in winning "one of the strongest of Satan's strong holds." Elder Thomas was pastor of the Broadrun church in Fauquier County when Allen Wyley, a man of respectable standing in Culpeper County, invited him to visit Culpeper and preach. Benedict's *History*, Vol. II, page 32, tells of this visit and the result:

"Not knowing of any spiritual preacher Mr. Wyley had sometimes gathered his neighbors and read the Scriptures, and exhorted them to repentance; but hearing, after a while, of Mr. Thomas, he and some of his neighbors travelled to Fauquier to hear him. As soon as he heard him, he knew the joyful sound, submitted to baptism, and invited him to preach at his house. He came but the opposition from the wicked was so great that he could not preach."

This visit of David Thomas to Culpeper occurred in 1763 and in 1769 or 1770 he still remembered the opposition encountered there and looked upon that section as one of Satan's strongest strongholds.

A PLEASING INCIDENT

In Connection with Ireland's Preaching from the Colonial Jail at Culpeper

During the "World War," while the author was Camp Pastor at the Marine Training Station, at Quantico, Virginia, he met Mr. V. M. Fleming, of Fredericksburg, a well-informed and enthusiastic Baptist. In talking about the early history of our denomination and the period of persecution through which our brethren passed, Mr. Fleming related an experience which bears directly upon James Ireland and the old Colonial jail at Culpeper. At our earnest solicitation Mr. Fleming kindly consented to put it in writing, and it is now given to the public for the first time:

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church,' is exemplified so often. The special point I want to make is,

where there was the greatest persecution of the Baptists, right there has been the greatest progress. A belt of country running through the Northern Neck to Fredericksburg and on to Culpeper, was the part of Virginia in which Baptists were persecuted the most. An incident apropos of this matter, about the year 1768 or thereabouts, the Established Church, as they saw it, thought it best for the Christian Religion to eliminate the Baptists and the Baptist influence. Near Culpeper, there lived a man named Arnold who was the head of this persecution. He had a daughter named Amy, an attractive child of 12 or 14 years. The time we refer to was the time Mr. Ireland, a Baptist preacher, was confined in the Culpeper jail, put there by Arnold. In spite of all commands to the contrary he spoke through the gratings of the jail windows. One morning Amy Arnold asked her father to permit her to go to Culpeper two miles off to hear this wonderful man of God and an orator as well. Her father denounced her desire to go and forbade it, but the intercession of her mother prevailed. She started off with some other neighbors, who lived about her, all these girls going bare-footed, until they had crossed the creek just beyond Culpeper, where they stopped to put on their shoes and stockings. When they neared the jail they heard the singing. Boys and girls in evidence everywhere, in the trees and on house-tops. As they approached the jail, they were singing that old time hymn,

‘As we journey, let us sing,
Praises to our Heavenly King.’

“When the preaching began some word of the Spirit sped its way to Amy Arnold’s heart and she was converted. It is useless to go into the scene which transpired on her return home, they were severe indeed, as one can imagine. Her faith, however, stood firm, and she was baptized in the Baptist faith. After growing to womanhood, she moved with some of her friends to Charleston, S. C., where she married a man named Hamilton. By this marriage there were many descendents, all Baptists and men of distinction through whom to a large extent was the Baptist influence in the South spread. One of whom was Judge Haralson, who ten or fifteen years ago was President of the Southern Baptist Convention, than whom there was no man distinguished

more in the South, and through whose influence the growth of the Baptist church was greatly enlarged.

"Twenty-five years ago the writer of this was in Meridian, Miss., and in an address before a large mass meeting of the Baptist Sunday Schools, he alluded to the incident named. After concluding the address, an elderly gentleman of very distinguished bearing came to him and introduced himself as Judge Hardy, who was then candidate for Congress from the Meridian District, and said this Amy Arnold to whom I referred was his great grand-mother, and the account I gave was in full accord with the very statements his great grand-mother related many times. Said he was a boy 10 or 12 years old and she very old then, but related this circumstance just as I had told it, the hymn and all, except this difference, using *Heaven-ly* King instead of *Heavenly* King. Judge Hardy said he delivered an address at one Commencement of the University of Mississippi, at Oxford, on this subject, indeed came to my room at the hotel and read the address, which was taken so far as this account went from his great grand-mother, which account had very little, if any, variance from the address I gave."

WHIPPING BAPTIST PREACHERS

*Baptist Preachers Were Knocked Down, Dragged Out
and Otherwise Maltreated in Virginia, But They
Were Never Whipped by Order of the Court*

James Ireland states that he "expected every court to be brought out to the whipping post, and suffer there in a public manner, before the gazing multitude," but he adds, "It appears that their power did not reach so far, or it would have been executed."

There is no record in all the Virginia courts, so far as this writer's search has gone (and he has looked diligently for it because he was under the impression that it was there), where any preacher was *whipped* by the direct order of the Court. In one case at least, an officer of the law, a sheriff, did whip a preacher so severely that he carried the scars to his grave—but it is not said that he was carrying out an order of the Court. However there were many private individuals of the baser sort who were willing to wield the whip without the sanction of legal

authority. For example, Thomas Waford was *whipped* in Middlesex County and bore the scars on his back to his grave, although he lived to be fore-score years of age. John Waller was *whipped* in Caroline County, by the sheriff of that county, who gave him not fewer than twenty lashes. He, too, bore the marks of his beating to his grave. Other references are made by our historians to "whippings" which were inflicted upon innocent Baptist preachers, but the authors were not very specific in their statements. In Massachusetts we know that Obadiah Holmes, a Baptist preacher, was sentenced to be *whipped* in Boston, and so barbarously was the sentence executed that for days and weeks he "could take no rest but as he lay upon his knees and elbows, not being able to suffer any part of his body to touch the bed whereon he lay." The executioner used a three-corded whip, giving him thirty strokes, spitting upon his hands three times, and striking with all his strength.

But this writer has been unable to find the record of one case in the Virginia Colony where the Court *ordered* the *whipping* of a Baptist preacher. If the *whipping* of preachers had been permissible under the Virginia laws, one wonders what compensation the officer would have received. In 1750 an advertisement appeared in the *New York Gazette*, as follows: "The Public Whipper being dead, 20 pounds a year is offered to a successor at the Mayor's office." A charge of four-pence was made in England for whipping a boy. And this fee remained in force for a long time. But the *whipping* of a woman, if she were a stranger, was a little more costly undertaking. When such punishment was meted out to a town's woman, the hireling was remunerated at a higher rate, as may be supposed from the consideration of several circumstances. To take a violent, noisy woman from her home, tie madam to the tumbrel and *whip* her round the town, was an undertaking that required not only assistance, but protection as well for the wielder of the thong. In the seventeenth century the mayor of Lyme, England, paid four pence for *whipping* William Winter's boy, four shillings for *whipping* four women, or a shilling apiece. One of the women must have been an obstreperous character, for the Town Account Book of Lyme contains an entry showing that two shillings and six pence were "paid two

soldiers to attend the *whipping of a woman.*" (From *Ten Thousand Wonderful Things*, p. 175.)

By this we see there were graded fees for floggings in the mother country, and if the Royal Colony had followed her example one wonders what whipping preachers would have cost. At first it might be supposed that ministerial *whippings* would be rated high, but upon reflection the conviction grows that they would have been rated low, for these Heralds of the Cross would have yielded their backs to the thongs as willingly and submissively as they did their bodies to the jails of the province. James Ireland said he expected to be put through that ordeal every court day, but that he sat down, counted the cost, and believed that with Christ's strength he could endure it all. John Waller was *whipped* so outrageously in Caroline County that he was in "a *gore of blood*" when the sheriff finished.

JAMES IRELAND

Pastor Happy Creek, Buck Marsh, and Water Lick

James Ireland was pastor of Water Lick church in Shenandoah County, Happy Creek and Buck Marsh in Frederick County, at the time of his death, May 5, 1806. The three churches sent him the most affectionate letters of appreciation and sympathy in his illness, the letters being officially signed by the church clerks.

"The following notice of his character and labors is taken from the Winchester Gazette:

"Elder James Ireland was pastor of the Baptist congregations at Buckmarsh, Happy Creek and Water Lick, in Frederick and Shenandoah Counties, Virginia. He had labored nearly forty years in his Lord's vineyard, and during a great part of the time through much infirmity of body. He was always distinguished as an able minister of the New Testament, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, giving to saint and sinner their portion in due season. During his last illness, which confined him to his bed about three months, his mind was tranquil and serene. Fully sensible of his approaching dissolution, and perfectly resigned to the will of God, he endured all things, as seeing Him who is invisible; and having an eye to the

recompense of reward, patiently waiting for the manifestations of the sons of God. On Sunday, the first instant, a suitable and affecting discourse was delivered at Buckmarsh Meeting-house, the place of his interment, to a numerous and weeping audience, by Elder William Mason, from 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course," etc.'" (Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (First Series), 1860, p. 124.)

In Samuel Kercheval's *A History of the Valley of Virginia* (1902), page 62, he refers to James Ireland's persecution and imprisonment in Culpeper jail, and this bit of illuminating information concerning him.

"The author had the satisfaction of an intimate personal acquaintance with Mr. James Ireland, and lived a near neighbor for several years before his death. He was a native Scotchman; of course his pronunciation was a little broad. He had a fine commanding voice, easy delivery, with a beautiful natural elocution in his sermonizing. His language, perhaps, was not as purely classical as some of contemporaries; but such was his powerful elocution, particularly on the subject of the crucifixion and sufferings of our Saviour, that he never failed to cause a flood of tears to flow from the eyes of his audience, whenever he touched that theme. In his younger years he was industrious, zealous, sparing no pains to propagate his religious opinions and principles, and was very successful in gaining proselytes; hence he became an object of great resentment to the established clergy, and they resorted to every means within their reach to silence and put him down. But in this they failed. He at length triumphed over his persecutors, was instrumental in founding several churches."

Dr. Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), page 124, gives this description of Mr. Ireland's personal appearance:

"Mr. Ireland was a man of common stature, a handsome face, piercing eye, and pleasant countenance. In his youth he was spare, but he became by degrees quite corpulent, so that not long after his second marriage he wanted but nineteen pounds of weighing three hundred."

MEMORIAL TO JAMES IRELAND

James Ireland's last pastorate included old Buck Marsh church, in the cemetery of which he was buried. "The meeting-house of Buck Marsh church stood about one-half mile north of Berryville, the seat of Clarke county. An old grave-yard, which may still be



BERRYVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH

seen adjoined it. Here in an unmarked grave, reposes the dust of Elder James Ireland, of precious memory. This early body are well and worthily perpetuated in the present Berryville church, one of the most vigorous constituents of the Shenandoah Association." (From a footnote in Beale's *Semple*, page 416.)

The Berryville Baptist Church has now (1938) a church membership of 348, and a Sunday-school enrollment of 196.

In the church-yard of the Berryville church, to the right of the entrance, there stands a monument to this noble pioneer Baptist preacher James Ireland, who suffered so much for conscience's sake. A picture of the monument may be found in this volume. This memorial was unveiled before a large and



MONUMENT IN MEMORY OF JAMES IRELAND
Berryville Baptist Church Yard

appreciative audience with appropriate exercises on May 20, 1931, the author of this volume being present and witnessing the unveiling. The pastor of the Berryville church, Dr. L. A. Parker and Dr. L. M. Ritter, of Bowling Green, had prominent parts on the program, with Professor Garnett Ryland, of the University of Richmond, making the principal address. This address was

published by the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, distributed over the State, and copies of it are on file in the Society's room at the University of Richmond.

The inscription on this monument reads as follows:

1748 1806

"In memory of James Ireland minister of the gospel. Born in Edinburg, Scotland, converted in Frederick County, Va., baptized and ordained at Sandy Creek, N. C., imprisoned at Culpeper, Va., for preaching the gospel, organizer of Baptist churches, pastor of Buck Marsh Church 1788 to 1806. His body lies in Buck Marsh Cemetery near here.

"In gratitude for the blessings of spiritual religion and freedom of conscience won in part through his suffering this memorial is erected by the Baptists of Virginia on the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of his death, May 5, 1931.

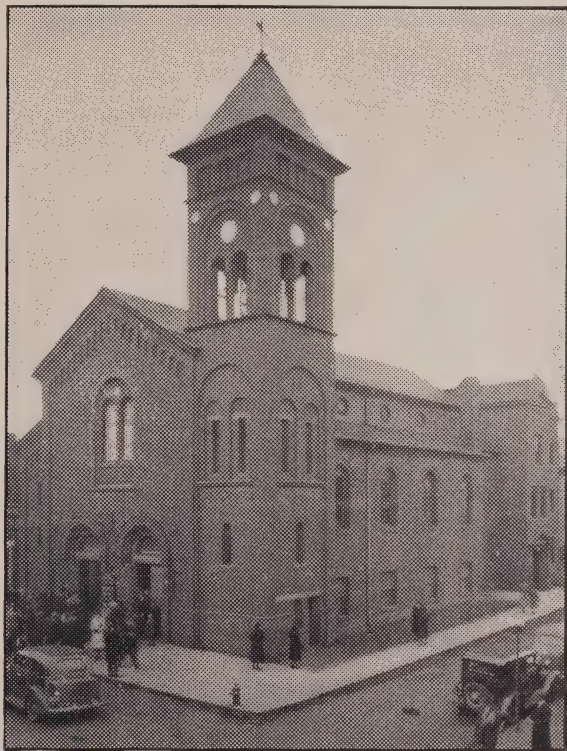
" 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' Acts 4:19:20."

Unfortunately the above inscription contains one historical error. Ireland did go to Sandy Creek, N. C., fully expecting to be baptized and ordained there, but so many matters claimed the attention of the Association that no time was found for his baptism and ordination.

However, arrangements were made for him to receive the ordinance of baptism on his return from North Carolina. He accompanied Elder Samuel Harriss to his home in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, where Elder Harriss was the pastor of a church called Fall-creek. It was here in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, and not in North Carolina, that James Ireland received his baptism, Elder Harriss being the administrator, and Ireland his first candidate. It was also at this Fall-creek church that he received his ordination, his credentials being signed by eleven ministers.

The *Religious Herald* of May 28, 1931, contains an account of the beginning of the movement that culminated in this Memorial to Elder James Ireland.

While the money was being raised for this Memorial to James Ireland, Rev. E. W. Winfrey, D. D., the pastor of the Culpeper Baptist Church, contributed the following interesting article to the *Religious Herald*. It was printed in the issue of February 13,



CULPEPER BAPTIST CHURCH

1930, and is reproduced here, since it contains some incidents of Ireland's life and imprisonment not found in the preceding pages:

JAMES IRELAND

E. W. Winfrey

"Josh. 4:21: 'What mean these stones?'

"The people had spent forty years in their pilgrimage from Egypt to the Promised Land. They had seen the signs and wonders and mighty acts of Jehovah in their deliverance,

and they had witnessed, as they went from station to station, the remarkable providences and miracles by which Jehovah had protected and sustained them. These stones, placed under Joshua's direction, would recall that history for the instruction and inspiration of generations to come.

"There is an effort making to erect a memorial to James Ireland, at or near his grave at Berryville, Va. When our present house of worship was being built it occurred to some of us to have the name James Ireland molded in the new bell. So that imagination, when our bell is rung, may hear JAMES IRELAND calling us forth.

"James Ireland was born in Edinburg, Scotland, in 1748. He died on May 5, 1806, nearly 124 years ago. He was 'a man of common stature, straight body and limbs, a handsome face, a piercing eye, and pleasant countenance. In his youth he was spare, and used to be called "little Jamy Ireland." But he came to be corpulent, and later he wanted but nineteen pounds to weigh 300.' He was married, first to a Miss Burgess, of Fauquier county, who bore him eight children, and some eighteen or twenty years later to a Miss Pollard, of Frederick county. The most of his children who survived him moved to Ohio and Kentucky. In June, 1772, a horrible attempt was made by a colored cook and a visiting woman to poison some or all of the family. One of the children died the next morning on his step-mother's knee after drinking of the poison, and Mr. Ireland was very sick.

"Mr. Ireland's mind had its poetic moods and he wrote some elegant verses. In his youth he was 'wild,' full of 'life,' and it not easy to 'tame' him. He was much given to dancing, perhaps to swearing, and to other idle and sinful amusements. He was a real problem for Divine grace. But when grace did lay hold upon him his exercises were profound and even startling. He sometimes had dreams—dreams that were in a sense prophetic.

"After visiting an association of Baptists in North Carolina he was baptized, although he had been reared in a Presbyterian family—and was licensed to preach. He soon became the pastor of some churches, in which service he continued for many years.

"Somewhere about 1770, at or near Carter's Run, Fauquier county, near to Culpeper county, he was arrested just

after preaching and at the close of a prayer. He was put into jail here—the jail standing on what is a part of our present lot. Curses, false accusations, sticks and stones followed him. He found opportunity to preach. Friends supplied him with wood. A tall and large roommate of his, a wicked man, was slowly impressed by his influence and perhaps converted, and came to be his friend—against his protest plucking away some hair from the heads of some of his enemies who came too near his barred window.

“At his trial a lawyer was employed for his defense—afterward Judge Bullett, for the sum of five ‘pounds,’ \$16.66. This man shocked and ridiculed Mr. Ireland’s persecutors, until, ashamed, they left their places, the judge and the jury. He applied, with a signed petition, to Lord Botetourt, the then Governor of Virginia, for a license to preach in the county and to build a house of worship in the county. While that house was building an arbour was erected in which ministers began in a somewhat more regular way the religious work in the county.

“It is not for James Ireland alone that an appeal is made for contributions for a memorial. He, with Waller, the Craigs, Moffett, McClannahan, Saunders and many others of those days, richly deserve such recognition. But there is something larger and broader for which we plead. That is, we plead for the history of those days and for the perpetuation of the influence of their achievements. The stones placed under Joshua’s direction were to recall a history, a great history, a history which showed the presence and the power of God.

“These things we have been recounting happened before our revolution—before Jefferson’s Act which was written into law in 1785, and before our Constitution, with its three great Amendments, was adopted—the first of those Amendments, guaranteeing freedom in religion. Those men toiled and suffered for the creation of the sentiment and conviction and purpose of religious freedom. Now, all denominations may preach and teach their views without any fear of disturbance or violence by any officers of the law. Further: Those men toiled and suffered for salvation by grace through faith—salvation without any sort of priestly act or ordinance. It would be better that all of our other activities

and interests should fail than that these principles be forgotten. We plead for every token and sign and evidence of their recognition, and we would build our characters and our civilization on these principles—freedom in religion and salvation by grace.” Culpeper, Va., February 5, 1930.

It is gratifying to know that the intentions of Dr. Winfrey and his people were carried out, the name of James Ireland being molded on the bell that now hangs in the belfrey of the First



BELL IN CULPEPER BAPTIST CHURCH

Baptist Church of Culpeper, the full inscription of which is as follows :

TO THE MEMORY

OF

JAMES IRELAND

BORN 1748 DIED 1806

It is a unique memorial to this good man who was so frequently and barbarously persecuted. The members of that church, when the bell is rung, can think of James Ireland as calling them to worship, and through the courtesy of the present (1938) pastor of the church, Dr. J. T. Edwards, we are enabled to include a picture of the bell in this volume.

The famous White House in Page County was built about the year 1760 and was used for religious services from a very early date. James Ireland preached there regularly as the following excerpt will prove :

“From my residence on Smith’s Creek, I used to pursue my course into what is now Rockingham County, from thence take a transition across the Massanottin mountain, and attend stately at a place called the White House, where I was instrumental in planting what has been since called the Menonist Baptist Church.” (From *The Life of the Rev. James Ireland*, p. 189.)



FAMOUS WHITE HOUSE

CHAPTER X

1770

WILLIAM WEBBER AND JOSEPH ANTHONY IMPRISONED
IN CHESTERFIELD COUNTY JAIL

FAUQUIER COUNTY

County Seat—Warrenton

Morgan Edwards's *Volumes*, page 46, contain this comment on Elder John Picket, the pastor of Carter's Run church:

JOHN PICKET

Imprisoned in Fauquier Jail Three Months, or More

"His share in the troubles of the times was not inconsiderable. Three months was he in Fauquier goal, put there by Squire Edmonds; often insulted by the mob and others, whose births, fortunes and ranks in life ought to have deterred them from savage and brutal actions."

In Dr. Beale's Revision of Semple's *History*, page 362, is this statement:

"John Picket, the pastor of Carter's Run church, was incarcerated in the Fauquier county jail, where for three months he preached through the grates."

Semple's *History*, 1810 edition, says "for about three months." The full quotation may be found on pages 413 and 414:

"His zeal and activity could not pass unnoticed by the enemies of the cross. The mob broke into the meeting house and split to pieces the pulpit and table; while the magistrates issued their warrant and seizing Mr. Picket thrust him into Fauquier prison. There he continued for about three months preaching through the grates, and admonishing as many as came to him, to repent and turn to God. The word of God was not bound. Great numbers were awakened under his prison labours. This imprisonment took place about 1769."

Dr. Semple is clearly in error, that "This imprisonment took place about 1769." It is also evident that he was not certain about the year. However, recent discoveries from two different sources make it possible to state the exact year. Morgan Edwards's manuscript *Notes*, page 33, state that John Picket was:

"Put in fauquire goal for 3 months in 1770—put in by Wm. Edmonds Esq."

And Mr. Edwards's statement as to the date is confirmed by the court records. The precise date of his commitment does not yet appear, but it was evidently prior to "February 26, 1770," for it was then he was "brought into court," and after trial "remanded" to the gaol until he gave the required bond and security. The court record is brief but conclusive and may be found in Order Book for the years 1768-1772, pages 163 and 164:

"At a Court held for Fauquier County the 26th day of February 1770

· "Present—Armstead Churchhill William
Edmonds Joseph Hudnall &
John Moffett Gents.

"John Picket who was Committed by a precept under the hand & seal of William Edmonds Gent. for Preaching Contrary to Act of Parliament was brought into Court. who having refused to Give security for his good behaviour ordered that he be remanded to Goal there to remain untill he Give security for his Good behaviour himself in the sum of Two hundred Pounds and two securities in the sum of One hundred pounds each.

Armistead Churchhill."

THE JAIL
Fauquier County

It is more than probable that the jail in which John Picket was imprisoned was the same jail that was ordered to be built in December, 1766, and "reviewed & received by the Court at their June meeting in 1767." If so, it is interesting to note that the contractor and builder of this jail was William Picket, who, perhaps was a kinsman of John Picket. William Picket was a prom-

inent citizen of Fauquier County, serving as Treasurer of the county, and also as custodian of the county's standard weights and measures. Some idea of the character of those early jails may be gathered from the specifications given by the Fauquier Court and recorded in their Order Book for 1766, pages 242 and 243:

"John Bell William Edmonds and Joseph Hudnall Gent are appointed to agree with an undertaker to build a prison for this County in the following manner, to be eighteen feet long and sixteen feet wide in the clear, eight feet pitch in the clear, to be built of hewed logs twelve inches square the joists and sleepers to be of hewed logs of the same size laid close, the whole to be dovetailed, and a layer of good mortar between each log at the sides and ends, a brick partition in the middle with a good brick chimney to have a fire place in each room well secured with iron grates above and below, two doors, one on the inside well secured with good bolts Locks bars & hinges the roof to be shingled with Chestnut or red Oak shingles, and the Corners of the house to be well braced and pinned with two braces at each corner one on the inside and the other without the foundation to be well underpinned with brick at least eighteen inches deep and a window in each end of the house twelve inches square well secured with good Iron bars. And this same gentlemen are impowered to let the undertaker have what Iron, bricks or other thing that may be necessary to build this Prison out of the old prison and to sell what remains for the most that can be got for the same."

Fifty-nine years ago and one hundred and nine years after John Picket's imprisonment in this so securely built bastile with its noticeably small windows only "twelve inches square," Mr. Chas. T. Green, writing from Warrenton, Virginia, to Rev. John L. Carroll, enclosed a copy of the Court's Record in this case, and made some pertinent remarks with reference to this imprisonment, which deserve a place in this chronicle:

"Warrenton, Va., May 24, 1879.

"Rev'd Jno. L. Carroll

"Dear Bro. C.

"The evidence of the arrest and imprisonment of our old Baptist brother John Picket and who as far as I can

ascertain is the only person ever subject to that sort of persecution in this County is very meager indeed. Of the fact and cause of his arrest and imprisonment there is no doubt, as is shown by the enclosed transcript from the records of the Court, but the warrant under which he was apprehended cannot be found nor do the records show what became of him after he was committed to jail, but there is a tradition here that he remained in confinement for a time (how long is not known) and occasionally preached through the grated window of the prison, but how or upon what terms he was released it seems now impossible to ascertain. His reputation for firmness how—and his great devotion to Baptist principles both of which qualities he is said to have possessed in an eminent degree forbid the supposition that he procured his release by a compliance with a law which was opposed alike to the plain teaching and spirit of the Gospel and the dictates of reason and of sound policy—the most reasonable conjecture I think is that his persecutors became ashamed of their intolerance and got him released informally (without bail), perhaps hoping there by to diminish the odium they had incurred by his imprisonment.

“The request of your postal was that I should prepare a paper on this subject for the June meeting, but finding so few authentic facts, I thought it best to write giving you such information as I had obtained, so that you might prepare the article yourself if you thought what is known of the case of Bro. P. to be sufficient importance to be preserved. Hoping you and Family are well and with kind regards to yourself, Mrs. C. and the children—

“I remain yours truly & fraternally

(Signed) Chas. T. Green.”

Dr. Semple's biographical sketch, already quoted, has this to say about Elder Picket after his release from prison:

“When he was turned out of prison, he seemed to increase in zeal; and extending his labours around about in Culpeper, and over the Blue Ridge, where he was so successful, that, on the first baptizing that was supposed to have taken (place) in Shenandoah, as many as fifty were baptized. He was never wearied in well doing; but continued steady to the end.”

Morgan Edwards's *Notes*, page 44, refer to another attempt to silence this fearless minister of the Gospel. He states that "Capt. Scott issued a warrant," but adds that it was "not executed."

Whether the following comment of Mr. Edwards as found in his manuscript, page 31, about the remarkable things that occurred in connection with the Carter's Run church had any reference to the arrest of John Picket, which was brought about by the warrant issued by William Edmonds, Esq., in 1770, or whether there was *another* similar occasion when Mr. McClannahan's mere physical presence had a restraining influence, thus far has not been determined.

"Remarkables (1) 2 memb., James Ireland and John Picket imprisoned (2) Great opposition, bestrip the pulpit & broke it—they did not proceed to violence for fear of mr. McClanahan who was stout."

"About June, 1803, he (John Picket) told his wife that his work was finished, tenderly beseeching her and the children to serve the Lord, and so fell asleep."

Where his sacred dust reposes is known only to the all-seeing Eye.

The other reference to James Ireland as one of the members of the Carter's Run church that suffered imprisonment may refer to his Culpeper experience, as there seems to be no hint that he was jailed in Fauquier County. But James Ireland and John Picket were not the only Baptists who met with opposition in Fauquier County. The pastor of the Chappawamsick church, in Stafford County, was Elder Daniel Fristoe, who paid a visit to Fauquier soon after his ordination and had an experience which he preserved in his diary, and will be related in its chronological order, under the date of June 15, 1771.

If John Picket was the only preacher who was actually imprisoned in Fauquier County it was not due to the inactivity of the county officials, for it is known that they issued warrants for the apprehension of Elder Richard Major, but failed in the attempt to arrest him. That they did not score again was not because they were out of the game, but solely due to the fact that

those who were with Elder Major were more and stronger than those who were against him.

There was another case in Fauquier County where the destroyer was robbed of his prey—that of Elder William Marshall, who was an uncle of no less a celebrity than the Chief Justice, John Marshall.

Elder William Marshall was noted in his early life for his devotion to the fashionable amusements of the day, but was converted, joined the Baptists and soon entered upon the work of the ministry. Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), page 106, gives the following interesting facts:

WILLIAM MARSHALL

Arrested But Released

“The conversion of this votary of fashion excited the surprise of many. Especially were they amazed, that an individual of so much distinction should have united with a sect everywhere spoken against. His ministry was attended by crowds. Most of his auditors were prompted by curiosity, desiring to hear what the convert would say respecting the change he had experienced; others went, supposing him to be deranged; and a few to mock and oppose him. He, however, was undaunted:

“ ‘His tongue broke out in unknown strains,
And sung surprising grace.’

“The word preached was not in vain, but was attended with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. One of the most remarkable seasons of ingathering which Virginia has ever known resulted from his labours. The enemies of the truth were much enraged, and determined, if possible, to arrest the march of this new doctrine; they seized Mr. M. and attempted to put him in prison, but his brother, Col. Thomas Marshall, interfered, and succeeded in obtaining his release. He continued to preach in the County of Fauquier with unabated zeal and success. Among the seals of his ministry were John Taylor and Joseph Redding, who afterwards became popular and useful laborers in the Lord's vineyard.”

Elder William Marshall continued his itinerant labors for several years, then became pastor of Happy Creek church, removing to Kentucky in 1780. His death occurred in 1808, when he was "in the seventy-third year of his age and in the hope of immortal life," according to Taylor's sketch. But a *Bulletin* of the Fauquier Historical Society, published in July, 1922, gives the date of his death 1809, and contains this statement also: "He was the best, if not the greatest of the Marshalls." A diligent search has been made to find out where Elder Marshall was buried but thus far without success.

PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

County Seat—Chatham

Again and again are we reminded of Dr. Howell's beautiful simile that new churches spring up out of the darkness and shine like stars in the Virginia firmament. The next church we notice is Fall-creek church, "So called from a little creek running into Dan river in the county of Pittsylvania," according to Morgan Edwards's *Notes*, page 3, and his account of this church follows:

FALL-CREEK

Constituted Fourth Friday in July, 1770

Samuel Harriss, the Pastor, Opposed and Slandered

"The church consists of 5 branches; one near Falls-creek; another at Countryline creek; another at Reedy-bottom; another at Sandy-creek; another at Cub-creek (in charlot county), in each of which is a meeting-house; that at Fall-creek was built in 1771 on land given by Thomas Ayeres, and is 32 feet by 20." * * * "they began in the month of Jul. 4th Friday 1770 when the following persons (members of Dutton Lane) were constituted into a distinct church. Rev. Sam. Harris and wife, etc." * * * "They joined the Association the same year. No remarkable event, only they met in Mr. Harris house from the beginning to——. One John Wright (a presbyterian minister) came here and mightily opposed and slandered them to their faces—His letters to Mr. Harris are yet extant. in one he saith 'the more I consider that kind of religion among the baptists and the religion of my bible, the more fully I am convinced that it is an awful delusion' (since excommunicated)."

Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (First Series), 1860, page 34, quotes Dr. Semple, as follows:

"Mr. Harris 'being in easy circumstances, when he became religious he devoted not only himself, but almost all his property, to religious objects. He had begun a large new dwelling-house, suitable to his former dignity, which, as soon as it was finished, he appropriated to the use of public worship, continuing to live in the old one. After maintaining his family in a very frugal manner, he distributed his surplus income to charitable purposes'."

Morgan Edwards's *Volumes*, page 22, state that:

"From the beginning to 1771 these people met at Mr. Harris's home, where they were all entertained at his expense; he killed beeves and opened his cellars against the time of meeting: these entertainments he called his love feasts."

Dr. Semple gives this informing and inspiring testimony of Colonel Samuel Harriss:

"After maintaining his family in very frugal manner he distributed his surplus income to charitable purposes. During the war (1775-1783), when it was extremely difficult to obtain salt, he kept two wagons running to Petersburg to bring up salt to his neighbors."

Finally, Maud Carter Clement's *The History of Pittsylvania County, Virginia* (1929), page 171, gives a fuller statement:

"Samuel Harris, the noted pioneer Baptist minister, wagoned military stores from Peytonsburg to Charlotte Town.

"Salt was a scarce and a precious article during the war, and Harris had his wagons bring up salt from Richmond for the inhabitants of the county. The salt allotted to the county was issued 'one quart per head to those who have salted their pork and two quarts to those that have not.'"

Early Baptist Meeting-Houses

Dr. Beale has a footnote in his Revision of Semple's *History*, page 198, describing the early meeting-houses, in general through-

out Virginia, in that early day, which may not be inappropriate here:

"The meeting-houses of the early Virginia Baptist were commonly plain weather-boarded structures, without paint either on the outside or within. There were no facilities provided for heating them. As a rule, the windows were high and narrow, and the seats were rude benches without backs. To enlarge their accommodations, sheds were sometimes added to two sides, which gave to some of the churches a barn-like appearance."

Samuel Harriss's house was evidently better than the average church building of that day, for he was abundantly able to erect a comfortable dwelling, and did so. How appropriately the brethren might have written to Elder Harriss, as the apostle Paul did to Philemon, and addressed their letters to:

"Samuel Harris our dearly beloved, and to the church in thy house."

During Harriss's itinerant labors he was arrested as a vagabond, schismatic and a disturber of the peace; had his meetings broken up by mobs; and the door of the house in which he was staying was battered down, thereby bringing on a fight between his sympathizers and the rude populace; he himself was knocked down while preaching, and in at least one instance was pulled down and hauled about by the hair of his head. He went to a jail to preach to the prisoners, was made a prisoner himself, and kept in confinement for some time. He was frequently made the Moderator of Associations, and when the General Committee of the United Baptist Churches of Virginia, sent their congratulations to President George Washington in 1789, it was Samuel Harriss who signed the Address, as Moderator.

He served his generation well before he fell asleep.

"Harris died at his home in Pittsylvania in 1799, where he was buried, but no stone marks the resting place of the Apostle of Virginia. In his will he requested that his funeral sermon be preached from 2nd Timothy, chapter 4, verses 7 and 8; and emancipated five of his slaves in reward for their faithful service to him." (Maud Carter Clement's *The History of Pittsylvania County, Virginia* (1929), p. 129.)

The text selected for his funeral oration was most appropriate:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course,
I have kept the faith:

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

The first item in Harriss's will was an unusual request, but it was perhaps most appropriate because of the high esteem in which he was held. It is clear that even in his dying request he had in mind the good that might result from such a course. Here is the item in his will which was drawn on January 13, 1799:

"1st. My body to be interred in a Christian-like manner, and every Bro. minister by whom I am regarded be requested to deliver a solemn discourse on the occasion at such time and place as they think proper, from II Timothy chap. II, verse 7 & 8."

It would be interesting to know how many funeral sermons were actually preached upon the death of this good man, and in compliance with this unusual request.

1770

Falls Creek's First Pastor
Samuel Harriss

What manner of man was Samuel Harriss, the first pastor of Falls Creek, an offspring of old Dan River church? James Ireland described him as follows:

"He was a great favorite of the ministers in Virginia, and they had planned it among them, that I should be the first person he would baptize. I saw him ordained, and a moving time it was. He was considered a great man in the things of time and sense; but he shone more conspicuously in the horizon of the church, during the time of our sweet intercourse together, so that he was like another Paul among the churches. No man like minded with him, who like a blazing comet, would rush through the colony or state displaying the banners of his adorable master, spreading his light and diffusing his heat to the consolation of thousands."

Samuel Harriss was baptized into the fellowship of Dan River church, of which Dutton Lane was pastor. In this church he was ordained as a "ruling elder" in 1759, as an "evangelist" on October 11, 1769, but it was while he was a "ruling elder" in his own church that he visited Virginia and gave such an impetus to the work of the Baptists, in organizing and establishing churches.

He had his share of rough usage during this period notwithstanding this statement found in the history of his own county:

"It is a striking fact that though Harris was the first to boldly proclaim the new faith in so many different parts of Virginia, yet he suffered little persecution." Taylor explains this saying, "his influence in society previously to his conversion as well as his naturally fearless spirit, contributed much to his advantage." (Maud Carter Clement's *The History of Pittsylvania County, Virginia* (1929), p. 129.)

This church, Falls Creek, is now known as County Line church, and Dr. Semple's *History* (1810), page 256, gives the following sketch of it:

COUNTY LINE
Constituted 1770

"This is an old church, and once a very flourishing one. Rev. Samuel Harriss was their first pastor. Although she is represented in the table, as having commenced her church-life in 1771, which is substantially correct; yet the name is not to be found in any of the association minutes for many years after that time. Falls Creek appears to have been her original name; and which was probably changed by the constitution of new churches. She is the offspring of old Dan river church, now dissolved; and is, herself, the mother of many others."

Morgan Edwards states that County Line was one of the "5 branches" of Falls Creek church, its organization dating from the fourth Friday of July, 1770, and a footnote in Beale's *Semple* (1894), page 333, gives the following interesting facts about it:

"The original meeting-house of this church was of logs, situated near Peytonsburg, in Pittsylvania. A new brick edifice was subsequently built in Halifax county, two or

three miles from the line. In 1883 the church again changed their place of worship and erected their present neat frame building in Pittsylvania. The church has had quite a long list of pastors, among whom Dr. A. B. Brown may be mentioned as having served three separate terms."

LOUISA COUNTY

County Seat—Louisa

The scene now shifts northeast to Louisa County, where the first Baptist church in this county was named, as were most of the churches of that early day, after the county in which it was located.

Morgan Edwards described the original meeting-house of the Louisa church as follows:

LOUISA, THOMPSON'S, GOLDMINE

Constituted in 1770

"The meeting house is 40 feet by 20, built in 1770 on land given by Joseph Thompson. * * * 'The minister, Rev. David Thompson, who has to his assistants James Chiles and Andrew Tribble. The former was put in goal at Fredericksburg for 48 days. The magistrates concerned were Larkin Chew, Wm. Smith and John Carter Esqrs. * * * They originated by means of Rev. Sam. Harris who in 1767 visited these parts. After him came Rev. James Reed and baptized one David Thompson and wife, Thomas Thompson, Richard Thompson, John Thompson and others to the number of 80 souls; these were 1770 constituted into a distinct church. No very remarkable event except their share of persecution'." (Morgan Edwards's *Volumes*, p. 47.)

When Semple's *History* was written this church was put down as "Thompson's, or Goldmine," and Beale's *Semple* (1894) states in a footnote on page 215, that the Goldmine church was in Louisa, and adds:

"Their meeting-house is situated two hundred yards east of Goldmine creek, and about seven miles north of the county-seat. The old site of Thompson's meeting-house, where the church worshipped prior to 1805, was about two miles west of its present site. William Waller served as pastor of this church until 1818."

1770

ORANGE COUNTY

County Seat—Orange

NATHANIEL SAUNDERS

Next to James Ireland, we have more authoritative information about Nathaniel Saunders than about any one of the other preachers incarcerated in the Culpeper jail. The earliest instance of opposition to Elder Saunders, that thus far appears, is furnished by a note which he received during the latter part of 1770. It is dated the 23rd preceded by the syllable "ber" and therefore must have been written on the 23rd of one of the last four months of the year. This information though imperfect is sufficient to show that this servant of the Master had attracted the attention of the authorities, as early as 1770, and warranted them in taking cognizance of his activities. This note of warning, written by one who signed himself W. Bradley, who must have been an officer of the law, perhaps a sheriff, has a bit of insolence in it, which we shall see was promptly and vigorously resented. The note is as follows:

NATHANIEL SAUNDERS

Arrested and Tried But Acquitted

"To Mr. Nathaniel Sanders.

"Sir. I take this opportunity to acquaint you that I must oppose you for preaching at this place and should Be Sorey to Doe it But as some of the Court has told me you give your word and oner that you would not com hear any more when you Brought your License to Court Before & was aquited on that & for some time you Behave Tell you forgot your word which * * * Lies * * * So you may depend after this day you or any other that coms to this place or Elsewhere in my Rech may Depend on my Taking them up & the jestus has promist that all that is brought Before them shall give Secureti. I am your Hum, &c Sat.

W. Bradley."

—ber 23, 1770

It is much to be desired that Mr. Bradley had mentioned the name of "this place" over which he seems to claim jurisdiction. But regardless of place his note of warning bears internal evidence of an earlier trial of Elder Saunders, for it states that, "some of the Court has told me you give your word and oner that you would not com hear any more when you Brought your License to Court Before & was aquited on that." So this epistle of Mr. Bradley reveals not only an earlier arrest of Elder Saunders but the additional fact that he had a license to preach at that time. When he secured a license, or what territory it covered, are matters at present beyond us, but it was most probably limited to a single meeting-house, and this restriction was so irksome to such a fiery herald of the cross that he chose to obey God rather than man, and "Go into all the world and preach the gospel," or, at least into that portion of it adjacent to his home. These early preachers found it difficult to curb their propensity to proclaim the precious truths of the gospel wherever and whenever the occasion presented itself, license or no license, and they were constantly getting into hot water for it, or, rather into a cold jail.

Elder Saunders seems to have replied to Mr. Bradley's letter and to have emphatically denied that he had promised the Court not to come there again to preach. This letter has not been preserved, or made accessible to the public, but fortunately it aroused Mr. Bradley's indignation to such a high pitch and he was so incensed by Elder Saunders emphatic denial of the charge that he quotes Elder Saunder's statement in his reply. So we have pretty conclusive proof that Nathaniel Saunders was not guilty of the charge and therefore did not belong to the Ananias Club. Mr. Bradley's testimony is conflicting and therefore may be thrown out of court. In his first communication he says "some of the Court has told me," and then in his second epistle he declares that "you told me yourself," that you "promised the Court not to preach there again." This letter is a lengthy document and illegible in places, but it reveals some of the arguments that were in vogue at that time between Dissenters and members of the Establishment, and for that reason it is worthy of being included in these pages:

"To Mr. Nathaniel Sanders

"In Orange.

"Sir—

"I have received your Epistolary Leter of no Date which I imagine you carefully omitted on purpose: for you might thin that your not Dating of it would put it out of my power to prove the falsity that you have asserted in it for it Leaves you at Liberty to Denie the Time I Received it: your words are 'you say I promised the Court not to com again: I promised no such thing. you certainly must be very forgetful or Else you must have the most impudence of any man alive for you told me yourself: when I met you coming from Court that you promised the Court not to preach there again as you found it in open violation of good order and government trample on the Laws and for justofication ask me whether you are to obey God or man: But if you would Read the Scriptures as you Direct me to Do you would there find that we are there ordered to obey Every ordinance of man for the Lord's Sake and that the Magistrate Dos not Bare the Sword of Justice in vaine: you charge me with the want of christian prenciples I must confess I am at a loss to Know what mean by that except you Blame me for not following you and . . . disagreeable to most of the Neighbors: and that the Court had forgive you for that offence: But if you persist in denying it I can produce the Records of this County to prove it: you threaten to appeal to Williamsburg I desire nothing more: for then there would be an opertunity to Let our Supreme Court know how you violate the Laws which their Honours are the national gardians of: you desire me to Read the Scriptures. I do Read them and it is from them that I Discover your policy for we are there told By our Saviour to Beware of the Sheepear that comes to the Sheep over the walls which I think if you would be canded you cant Denie But you do: for you trample on the Laws that is the Support of our Holy Church and come in at a Back Door to Delude her Dissiples: you charge me with Bringing offences and pronounce a heavy wo on me: But give me Leave to tell you that the man the sows Liyins among the people must Be he that Brings offence which yiu cant charge me with But I can with a great Degree of propriety Charge you with and prove it on you: So that I think you are the person on whom that wo should

fall and not me you also charge me with Rebellion against the people By which I suppose you mean that the poor few that you and your fellow labourers as you call them hath Deluded: if you can make me Belive . . . al to Seven then will I agree to be R . . . —hen I think you are: for . . . Bauling as you Do to Be heard for half a mile Round which in my opinion is nothing but ostentation: I assure you that I think Loud praying is no more a sign of True godliness than I think Loud Laughing is a sign of Real pleasure: I chuse to follow the direction of our Saviour's Excellent Sermon on the mount where he directs us to pray in private and we shall be rewarded in publick you also Bring a simely of seducing a servant which in answer to it I shall propound t you another: to wit if you had a vineyard in which you had a number of Labourers and they had been Brought up within the walls thereof and were good and honest Servants untill a Stroller by Art and Stratagem gets into the vineyard and then fell to preaching to the Labourers and tells them that they know nothing of their Business But if they would be Ruled by him he would Larn them the right way untill By threats and persuations their Brain is intoxicated and they Begin to throw don the wall and Digg up the vines: you also say you are ordered to preach to all the world and I suppose you think you comply with it by trying to Set Christians by the ears were you to go and strive to convert the pagans to christianity . . . think well of the undertaking . . . But no says you then I should Run a Risk of my life which I don't care to do for all the promisees in the Gospell: I have no more to ad . . . hope you will Take my advice and Leave off preaching here until you get a License from . . . and that you will be wo and Persecuted as you say.

By Wm. Bradley."

Mr. Bradley was a typical churchman of that day in that he was opposed to excitement in religious matters. Whatever else may be said about the pre-Revolutionary religionists—of all of them was one thing true—they frowned upon excitement in religion, resembling the New Englander who was interred in Copp's Hill Burying Ground, Boston, and whose epitaph reads: "He was an enemy to enthusiasm." According to *The New English Dictionary* the word "enthusiasm" in the eighteenth

century stood for "extravagance, ill-regulated or mis-directed religious emotion," which is not at all commendable; but it "has now chiefly the meaning of an earnest and commendable devotion," and many people during the days of persecution in Virginia were "enemies of enthusiasm" even in its present day meaning. William Bradley wrote Nathaniel Saunders, accusing him of unnecessary and pretentious parading of his belief, and even in this day it is quite proper to manifest unbounded enthusiasm in politics, in athletics and in all kinds of sports. But when it comes to religion all outward demonstration of an inward feeling is taboo, and must be throttled at once. While these imprisoned preachers of old Virginia were enthusiastic about the Lord's work they were not religious enthusiasts, fanatics, or bigots, or any thing of that sort. They were men of strong, deep and abiding convictions.

Mr. William Bradley wielded a facile pen, even if it was one of a pronounced phonetic type, and with a dash and a flourish he taunted Mr. Saunders with coming in at the back door of the Church to "Delude her Disciples" and threatened him with the terrors of the courts. These fearless preachers were constantly getting themselves into trouble because they chose to obey the voice of conscience and the command of God, rather than the dictates of unreasonable men.

The outcome of this wordy conflict is not known, but as Elder Saunders was a resident of Orange County it is probable that he only invaded the sacred precincts of Culpeper County upon rare occasions and at irregular intervals. In this way he may have been able to evade the vigilance of the civil authorities and thereby escaped arrest, thus bringing to naught the boasting of Mr. Bradley. There is now no evidence that this determined churchman and this undaunted dissenter ever measured swords with each other, and it is highly probable that they contented themselves with long distance firing.

What became of William Green, Gentleman, Mr. Saunder's first antagonist, no more is known than of the final outcome of this correspondence with William Bradley. But Elder Saunders was destined to encounter a more formidable foe in the summer of 1772, which will be noticed under the date of August 22, of that year.

1770

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY

County Seat—Chesterfield

Semple's *History* mentions the name of seven men who were confined in the Chesterfield County jail, for preaching the Gospel: viz., William Webber, Joseph Anthony, Augustine Eastin, John Tanner, John Weatherford, Jeremiah Walker and David Tinsley, and adds that "some were whipped by individuals, several fined. They kept up their persecution after other counties had laid it aside." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 207.)

This is the only reference thus far found to any preacher being "whipped" in Chesterfield County, and one can but regret that Dr. Semple did not mention specifically each case instead of simply saying "some were whipped by individuals." Perhaps his statement means that in addition to the seven men who suffered imprisonment there were others who were whipped and still others who were fined.

In Charles Campbell's *History of Virginia*, page 555, he states that:

"The persecution of the Baptists commenced in Chesterfield, in 1770, and in no county was it carried farther. According to tradition Colonel Archibald Cary, of Amptill, was the arch-persecutor. In few counties have the Baptists been more numerous than in Chesterfield."

The first instance of persecution in Chesterfield County,* of which there is any record, occurred in December, 1770, when William Webber and Joseph Anthony, two zealous young preachers (ministerial sons of the Goochland church), went from Goochland County across James River into Chesterfield County and began preaching. They had been invited by some of the inhabitants, and it is said that at that time there was not a Baptist in the entire county. Dr. Semple's account of their visit states:

"They met with rigid treatment: the magistrates finding that many were turning to righteousness (to madness, as

they would have it), and, that these young labourers were likely to do them much harm, issued warrants, and had them apprehended and cast into prison."

On January 4, 1771, after being in jail for several weeks they were brought before the following magistrates:

Seth Ward	Robert Goode
Jacob Ashurst	Francis Goode,
Gentlemen Justices	

The Court's record of their trial may be found in the Order Book of Chesterfield County, No. 4, page 489, and reads as follows:

WILLIAM WEBBER AND JOSEPH ANTHONY

Imprisoned in Chesterfield County for Three Months

"Joseph Anthony and William Webber being brought into Court on a warrant issued against them for misbehaviour by Itinerant preaching in this County being of that sect of dissenters from the Church of England commonly called ana baptists, and on hearing they acknowledged that they had preached in the upper end of this County at a meeting of sundry people there Whereupon it is ordered that the said Joseph and William be committed until they enter into recognizance touching the premises themselves in the penalty of one hundred pounds and two Sureties in penalty of fifty pounds each or their respective goods, &c. to be levied &c. for their being of good behavior for the space of one year ensuing.—

"N. B. the said Joseph and William offered to take the oaths to his Majesties person and Government and Subscribe to the Test and to be conformable as the law commonly called the Toleration Act requires, but the Court are of opinion that their doing so in this County will not authorize them to preach as the said Act directs."

Dr. Semple in commenting upon this action of the Court says on page 17 of his *History*:

"The court, requiring them to bind themselves to do, what they could not, in conscience, comply with, they continued in jail until the March following."

They had to obey the voice of conscience. A man's conscience popularly speaking is that power or faculty by which he distinguishes between right and wrong in conduct and character, and he dare not trifle with it. It is like a delicate piece of machinery in that it is very easily damaged by tinkering with it. Mrs. John Welch had the right idea about how to use it. She was the daughter of John Knox, the great Scotch reformer, and partook of the spirit of her illustrious father. When Mrs. Welch's husband, who had been imprisoned for his faith, was in the last stages of consumption, she made her way before King James to plead for his release.

"I will send him home with you," said the King to her importunate pleading, "if you will persuade him to submit to the bishops."

"Please your majesty," said Mrs. Welch as she held out her apron, "I'd rather carry his head home there, than tempt him to sin against his conscience."

And so these two humble Baptist preachers—Webber and Anthony—remained in a Virginia jail for three long months rather than do violence to their consciences.

WEBBER AND ANTHONY

*Preached Regularly Through the Grates
of Chesterfield Jail*

"While in prison," to continue Dr. Semple's account, "they did much execution, by preaching through the grates; many people attending their ministry, and many professed faith, by virtue of the labours of these, the Lord's persecuted servants. This was the beginning of God's work in the county of Chesterfield; no county ever extended its opposition, and persecution to the Baptists, farther than this; and yet, in few counties, have Baptist principles prevailed more extensively, than in Chesterfield." (Beale's *Semple* (1894), p. 271.)

In writing of William Webber as one whose name was worthy to be inscribed on the proposed Memorial Shaft, Dr. J. L. Burrows, has this to say in the *Religious Herald* for August 22, 1872:

“December 7, 1770, Wm. Webber and Joseph Anthony, having received the Macedonian invitation from some of the people, crossed the James river, into Chesterfield county. Their preaching was interrupted by a summons from the magistrate to answer for violating the ecclesiastical State law. They were thrust into Chesterfield jail. The authorities, as usual, required them to give bond and security to preach no more in Chesterfield county. As usual, they declined. They were kept in prison for three months. They made regular appointments for preaching twice a week, and, as they could not go to the congregations, the congregations came to them. The space around the jail was the meeting place, and the sill of the jail window was the desk upon which lay their Bible and hymn book, while the iron grating was but slight interruption to their earnest utterances of the truth. The strong bars might confine their bodies, but could not confine their voices or their souls. There were precious revival scenes and scores of conversions to God, under those jail windows. Baptist principles were largely advertised in Chesterfield county, at the expense of the State, and ever since have moulded the sentiments, controlled the consciences, and comforted the hearts of the masses of the people.”

Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, Vol. I, page 154, contains this reference to Mr. Webber's work while confined in Chesterfield jail:

“The wicked designs of his persecutors were utterly defeated; for the word of the Lord mightily prevailed. Many believed the gospel, and acknowledged the Lord Jesus as their Redeemer and King. Perhaps in no portion of his life did Elder Webber prosecute more successfully his labors of love.”

Another evidence of the high moral character of these men may be found in Taylor's *Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1838), Second Edition, page 44:



WEBBER MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Jail Doors Left Open But the Prisoners Remained

A Baptist church now stands as a memorial to Elder William Webber, on Highland Avenue, near Stop 5, Petersburg Pike. This church, the Webber Memorial Baptist Church, was organized on September 3, 1921, with forty members, and today (1938) has a membership of 284, with Rev. Edward W. Eanes, pastor.

"Such was the power of Joseph Anthony's ministry while in jail, as he lifted up his voice and proclaimed Christ to the crowds without, that it was judged the best policy to dismiss him. The jailer was directed to shut the door of his cell, but to leave it unlocked, that it might be reported he had fled from prison. Mr. Anthony chose to continue. The door was then left open—still he remained. He was persuaded, with his fellow-prisoner, to escape. But he replied 'they have taken us openly, uncondemned, and have cast us into prison; and now, do they cast us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out'."

ELEAZER CLAY

A concrete case will illustrate the success of these young preachers while preaching from the grated window of Chesterfield jail. It is that of Elder Eleazer Clay's conversion. The

arrow of conviction had pierced his heart some time before, but he struggled on unsaved. Now these preachers reached a friend of Elder Clay, and he in turn was made the instrument of his salvation. Taylor's *Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers*, Vol. I, page 208, gives this account of what happened:

*Effective Preaching Through the Grated Window
of Chesterfield Jail*

"One of the subjects of this good work, an intimate friend of Elder Clay, became deeply concerned on his behalf and having called to see him, was made the instrument of again awakening his mind to consider the value of eternal things. He soon saw and felt his need of Christ; and found peace in believing. Although persecution was raging, he at once acknowledged his new Master, in the ordinance of baptism. This took place in August, 1771. His sincerity and firmness were indicated by the fact, that while he was at that time in prosperous worldly circumstances and possessing much influence in society, while the Baptists were held in almost universal contempt, he nevertheless determined to identify himself with them."

Elder Clay must have been the "one minister in Chesterfield county," who, according to Benedict's *History*, Vol. II, page 459, was reputed to be "worth one hundred thousand dollars." Immediately upon his baptism he began to preach, was soon ordained, and in a short time became one of the constituent members of the Chesterfield church. He did much good within the limits of his own county, and died May 2, 1836.

An obituary notice of Eleazer Clay appeared in the *Religious Herald* for May 13, 1836, in which this statement may be found:

"In 1758, although a boy he joined the army of King George II, and went out against the French and Indians."

In 1858 Prof. W. J. Morrisett of Farmville, inserted the following notice in the *Religious Herald*:

"I will be glad to receive from anyone, any information respecting Rev. Eleazer Clay, of Chesterfield county, Va. He was the son of Charles Clay, and was born August 4th, 1744; enlisted in the campaign of 1758, moved to Chester-

field county, October 1765, was married to Miss Jane Apperson, of James City county, June 21st, 1767; was baptized July 1771, ordained May 1775, planted the first Baptist church in Chesterfield county; was on several committees appointed by the 'general committee' to petition the General Assembly against the 'Establishment'; and 'generally acted,' says Semple, 'as Moderator of the Middle District Association from the time of division in 1783'; and died in Chesterfield, May 2d, 1836, in his 92d year. Any old letters of his, manuscripts written by himself, or in which he was at all concerned, minutes of the General Committee, or of the Middle District Association, or of any other body, in which his name appears, if forwarded to me, will be taken care of, and returned or paid for, as it may be agreeable." (From the *Religious Herald* of March 4, 1858.)

In 1872, Prof. W. J. Morrisett, writing from Bristol, where he was a teacher in the Bristol Female College, quotes from memory several interesting incidents in connection with Elder Eleazor Clay's career, which were recorded in his diary. The diary was loaned to Dr. Geo. B. Taylor, and was in some way lost or destroyed, in one of Richmond's bank buildings. Prior to loaning this diary to Dr. Taylor, Mr. Morrisett had copied it in a blank book, and this book was burned with Mr. Morrisett's library while he was a professor at Alleghany College, just before the War Between the States. As Mr. Morrisett had copied this diary it would doubtless be more indelibly impressed upon his mind, than it would have been had he depended entirely upon a cursory reading of Elder Clay's notes. So from memory Mr. Morrisett has reproduced these notes, which should be preserved:

"One of the prisoners being sick on one occasion, and needing a little stimulant, Elder Clay bought a 'jug' of wine and carried it to the jail. The jailer told him it was against orders for prisoners to have wine. Elder Clay writes: 'I greased his paw and got it in'."

ELEAZER CLAY

*A Man Rode up in the Yard Where He Was Preaching
and Announced He Had Come to Cowhide
Elder Clay*

"Preaching in Chesterfield at a private house on one occasion, a man, whose name he mentioned, rode into the

yard, and asked for Mr. Clay. Being told that Elder Clay was preaching in the house, he remarked: 'I have come to cow-hide him.' Some one bore the message to Elder Clay, who replied: 'I am the son of Charles Clay, and fear no man. If I have to go out after him, I will give him one of the worst whippings he ever had in his life.' The *gentlemen* did not accomplish his object."

Man Killed by Lightning Who Had a Warrant in His Pocket to Arrest a Baptist Preacher

"He mentions the fact that a man was killed on one occasion by lightning, whilst on his way, with a warrant in his pocket, to arrest a Baptist minister for preaching. The names of the parties were mentioned in the diary.

"Colonel Cary, the chief magistrate of the county, was asked, on one occasion, why he permitted Elder Clay to preach unmolested, whilst he had others arrested, lodged in jail and punished. Col. Cary replied: 'Mr. Clay had a livelihood, but these others were taken under a vagrant law.'" (From the *Religious Herald*, August 29, 1872.)

The next *Religious Herald* (September 5, 1872), contains another communication from Prof. Morrisett in which he comments upon Elder Clay's usefulness in Chesterfield County:

"Through his (Eleazer Clay) exertions and munificent donations, a meeting house was built, about one and a half miles from his residence, at which was organized the Chesterfield church, in 1773. Being the first and only church in the county at that time, it very properly took that name. Elder Clay commenced preaching in 1771, as soon as he professed religion, and, I presume, was the only local preacher in the county at the time of the organization of the Chesterfield church.

* * * * *

"The Chesterfield church was usually called Clay's church. It received the name Rehoboth, I think, soon after Elder Clay died; but it is better known in the county as Clay's church than Rehoboth. Charlie Clay, Esq. grandson of Eleazer Clay, and a member of the Fulton church—was once clerk for many years of Rehoboth."

Elder Clay "being rich, he was very attentive to the preachers who were imprisoned in Chesterfield," says Semple's *History* (1810), page 206.

A footnote in Beale's *Semple*, page 270, tells of several extraordinary things in the life of Elder Clay, who came into the fold through the instrumentality of these imprisoned preachers:

"Eleazer Clay was born May 2, 1744, and baptized August, 1771. He became in 1773 one of the constituent members of Chesterfield church. In 1775 he was chosen pastor, and so continued until near the end of his life, which occurred May 2, 1836, on the ninety-second anniversary of his birth. 'He was increasingly attached to the Bible. Besides reading the Old Testament he read the New Testament through once a month'."

It is a remarkable achievement to serve one church as pastor for more than sixty years, more remarkable to live to the advanced age of nearly ninety-two years, but the most extraordinary statement perhaps of all is that of his increasing attachment for his Bible, and the frequency with which he read the New Testament. The saint who reads his New Testament through once a month ought to be ready for the garner.

Now notice these different statements. Prof. Morrisett states that Elder Clay was "baptized July, 1771." Taylor's account says, "August, 1771" was the time of his baptism, and Beale's *Semple* agrees with this date.

Another discrepancy in the dates, given by these writers, is that of his birth. Dr. Beale names "May 2, 1744" while Prof. Morrisett gives "August 4, 1744" which is the date on the gravestone.

On September 7, 1933, Prof. Garnett Ryland, of the University of Richmond, paid a visit to the old Clay grave yard in Chesterfield County, and copied the following inscription:

"In
Memory of
REV'D E. CLAY
Born Augt 4th 1744

Went into the French and Indian War in March, 1758.
Made a profession of the Christian Religion in Augt 1771,

became a member of the Baptist Church & Commenced Preaching the everlasting Gospel of JESUS CHRIST the same year. And continued as is believed an Humble follower of Jesus to his Death, which was 2nd May 1836. Aged 91 Years 8 Mo & 28 Days."

("In cement at base: 'Opened, 1925, closed, 1926 found nothing but bones'.")

Presumably the date of birth on the grave stone is the correct one—"August 4th, 1744."

ELDER JOHN CLAY

Elder Eleazer Clay was not imprisoned or persecuted in any way, but it is said that his brother, Elder John Clay, *was* imprisoned for preaching the Gospel. Elder John Clay was instrumental in establishing the Black Creek church, whose meeting-house is situated in the lower part of Hanover County, not far from the New Kent line. Elder Clay lived near Ashland, and was the father of Elder Porter Clay (who became a prominent Baptist minister in Kentucky), and also of the Honorable Henry Clay, widely known as the "Mill-boy of the Slashes," who became the illustrious American statesman, fought two duels, was thrice a candidate for the Presidency of the United States, and, although defeated each time, he was the acknowledged leader of his party for forty years, possessing in an unusual degree the elements of popular leadership and personal influence. The father of these two noted men, Elder John Clay, died when a comparatively young man, and did not live to witness his sons' preferment, but if the following statement is correctly reported, he, John Clay, was highly honored. This writer has been unable to find any other corroborative testimony with reference to this reported imprisonment, but he is constrained to quote the statement of Rev. G. S. Bailey, D. D., and leave it for future historians to verify. In a pamphlet bearing the title of *The Trials and Victories of Religious Liberty in America*, which was published in 1876 as a "Centennial Memorial," by the American Baptist Publication Society, Dr. Bailey emphatically states on page 40:

JOHN CLAY

Imprisoned in a Virginia Jail

"The father of Henry Clay was thus imprisoned, as a Baptist minister, in Virginia, as I was informed by Rev. Porter Clay, a brother of Henry Clay."

William Taylor Thom, in *The Struggle for Religious Freedom in Virginia; the Baptist*, page 26, quotes Dr. Bailey's statement about the imprisonment of the father of Henry and Porter Clay but throws no light upon it.

Where this imprisonment took place and the duration of it are problems also left for the future historian to solve.

But it is a fact and a matter of record that Elder John Clay did identify himself with these persecuted and imprisoned preachers. The Chesterfield County court records contain the information that he was one of John Tanner's bondmen, when the latter was arrested by Archibald Cary and dragged into court on May 15, 1773. (See account of John Weatherford and John Tanner, under the above date.)

SHENANDOAH COUNTY

County Seat—Woodstock

MILL CREEK

Constituted in 1772

As John Koontz was the first to preach "a pure gospel within the limits of Mill Creek," whose constituent members lived in Fauquier and Culpeper counties, and as he is said to have moved to Shenandoah County in that vicinity in November 1770, it is likely that the fierce persecution he endured commenced about that time, or not long afterwards. Mr. Koontz blew "the gospel trumpet" and "many were roused from their sleep, took alarm, and fled for refuge. Zion's gates were crowded with returning rebels." We continue Dr. Semple's account:

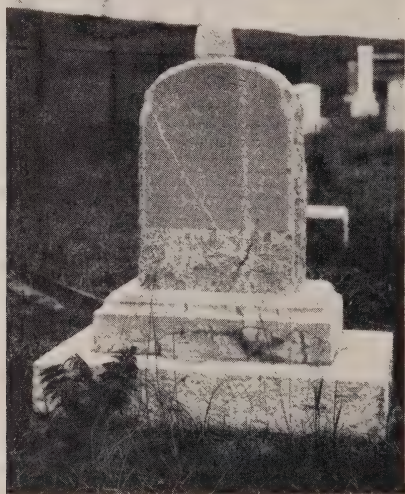
"But shall we say, that this work of Godliness progressed to so great an extent, without any opposition? Far from it. Can the lion be ousted from his den, and make no resistance? Can the bear be peaceably robbed of her whelps? Will the

strong man armed give up his palace, and his goods, without a struggle? It is not so. Mr. Koones found and sustained with fortitude no little opposition. At first they were contented to offer reproaches and threats. But as the work increased, they resorted to more harsh treatment. Once Mr. Koones was met on the road and beaten.

JOHN KOONTZ

Beaten with the Butt End of a Large Cane

"On another occasion, he attended a meeting towards Smith's creek. When he arrived at the place, he was met by a set of ruffians, who forbade his preaching. One Capt. Learhorn, a respectable man interfered and insisted he should preach, and prevailed. The persecutors however threw out heavy threats, that, if he ever came that way upon that errand again, they would beat him severely. Mr. K. could not be deterred from coming and they kept their word. He went not long after. His enemies had thrown in money and hired a son of darkness to beat him. Accordingly, as soon as he arrived, the miscreant began to strike him with the



ELDER MARTIN KAUFFMAN'S GRAVE

but end of a large cane, requiring him to promise never to come there again. This Mr. K. pointedly refused to do. The fellow continued beating, until he had almost disabled him. Then he left him. While thus suffering Mr. K. felt nothing more than a firm determination not to yield: But the savage had left him but a few steps, before he felt his soul exceedingly comforted. He could then thank God, that he was counted worthy, to suffer persecution for the name of Christ.

MARTIN KAUFMAN

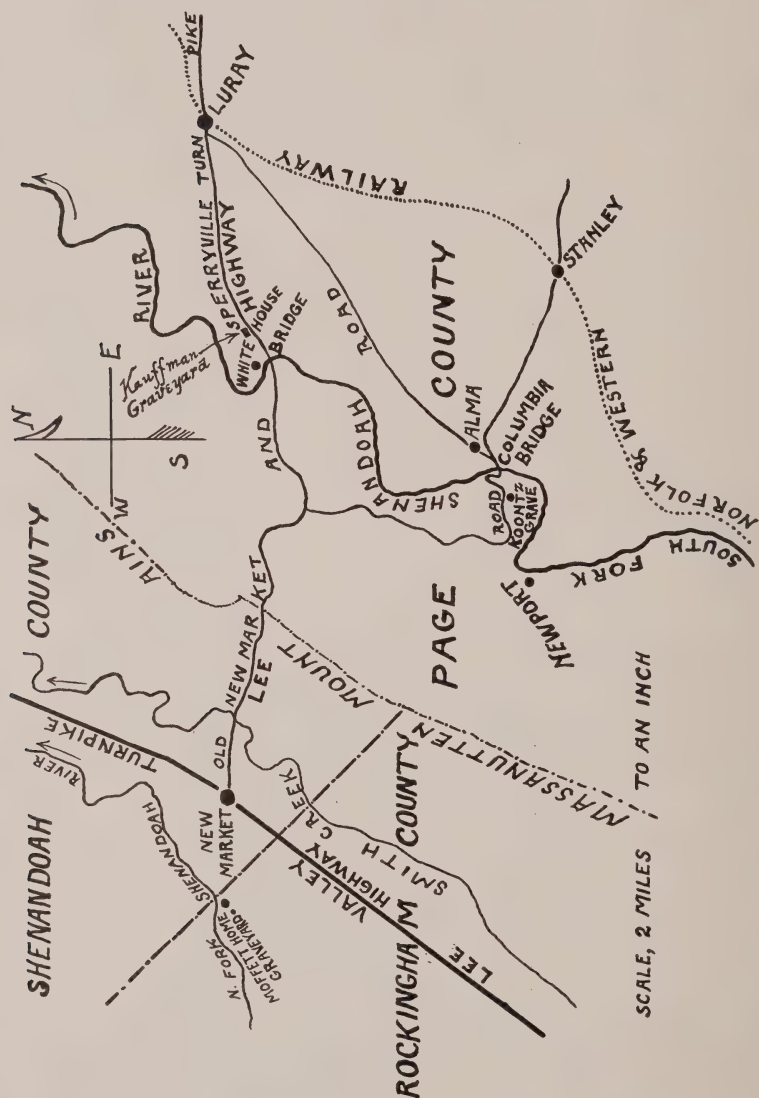
Beaten with a Stick Severely

"Some time after this, he and Martin Kaufman went to a place about 6 or 7 miles from thence, and while they were preparing to preach, he heard a man in a room adjoining that in which he and Mr. Kaufman were sitting, enquiring for John Koones. When he heard the enquiry, he immediately suspected, that some mischief was in agitation, and stepped into a third room and got out of sight. The fellow, who had probably been instigated by some other persons, did not know either Koones or Kaufmun. When he came into the room, he supposed Martin Kaufmun to be John Koones, and without asking any questions, fell upon him with a stick, or something of the kind. It was not until after poor Martin had received many blows, that he could convince the barbarian, that he was not named Koones. In the mean time the fellow's wrath was satiated and he went off without finding Mr. Koones at all.

JOHN KOONTZ

*Arrested and Started to Prison, But Released
Before Going Very Far*

"On another occasion, he attended an appointment, but before he had begun to preach, they took him off, and said they would carry him to prison. At a small distance from the place, they met a man coming to meeting, he said he had come to hear Mr. K. preach, that they should not carry him any farther, and attempted to rescue him: But the persecutors beat him off. When they had carried him a small distance farther, he said to them, take heed what you do. If I am a man of God, you fight against God. One of the party



Map drawn especially for this Volume, by Dr. John W. Wayland, the noted Valley Historian, to locate the burial places of three persecuted Baptist Preachers—Anderson Moffett, John Koontz and Martin Kauffman.

was immediately alarmed. The warning dropped, was owned of God, working in him, a repentance never to be repented of. They had proceeded but a little way, before the whole company began to relent, and agreed to let him go. The man who first took the alarm, and two or three more of the company, afterwards became Baptists. This was the last violent attack made upon Elder Koonen." (Semple's *History* (1810), pp. 184-186.)

It will be noticed that the names of these two preachers are spelt "Koonen" and "Kaufmun" in the above. Beale's *Semple* spells the first "Koontz" and the second "Kaufman" as also does Dr. Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), Series One. On page 102 of the last named volume, this additional comment on John Koontz's career may be found:

"Perhaps no Baptist in the United States has suffered more at the hands of opposers than did this servant of the Lord. Various means were employed to deter him from speaking in the name of Christ. Like his Master he was treated with contumely and scorn. They threatened him with imprisonment and stripes. But, sustained by an Almighty arm, he continued steadfast to his purpose. To please God, rather than man, was the desire of his soul. Conscious of the rectitude of his heart, and the scriptural character of the principles he inculcated, he was ready, with Paul, not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus."

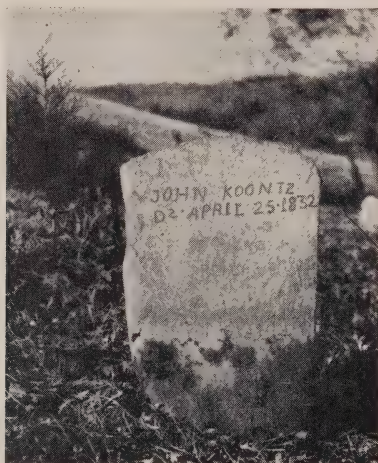
Dr. Semple's *History* was published some years before the death of John Koontz, and on page 186 of it may be found this high tribute to Elder Koontz:

"From the time of his (John Koontz) initiation into the ministry, until this day, he has continued faithfully to declare the counsel of God. Among the Baptists there are and have been many active and laborious preachers, whose souls have glowed with seraphic ardour; leaning upon the sacred promises, they were willing to suffer with Christ here, that they might reign with him hereafter: But considering Mr. Koonen's unwearied labours in the ministry, the length of time in which he has been engaged (about forty years),

considering that he has a constitution that has seldom or never failed him, requiring short and few intervals of rest, it may be fairly stated, that few, if any, in the state have surpassed him, as to the quantum of service devoted to his Lord's vineyard. He has been a labourer indeed, and will, no doubt, receive his full wages, when ever the Lord of the vineyard shall reckon with his servants. Mr. Koones is still living, and although grown old in service, he does not in any great degree slack his hand."

Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, page 104, states that "When he (John Koontz) was called from his earthly labors he was between eighty and ninety years of age." He died April 25, 1832, and is buried in an old grave-yard in Page County, near Columbia Bridge. A picture of his tomb-stone may be found in this volume, for which the author is indebted to Dr. John W. Wayland, the well known Valley historian. On October 5, 1932, he wrote as follows from Harrisonburg:

"As to Elder John Koontz's grave. I heard several years ago (soon after my address at Charlottesville, November 16, 1927) that he was buried on a farm on the old road from New Market to Gordonsville, where it makes a sharp turn to the left, as one goes east, near Columbia Bridge. Last Sunday afternoon (October 2, 1932), in the hope of secur-



HEADSTONE OF ELDER JOHN KOONTZ

ing something more definite to tell you, Dr. E. B. Jackson and I drove over to Page County, and at the place to which I had been referred years ago we found a graveyard on a high hill and in the center of it, or near the center, a grave marked by two small limestones. On the larger one, which is about ten by 15 inches, and which evidently marks the head of the grave, is scratched the following inscription:

“‘JOHN KOONTZ

D^s APRIL 25, 1832’

“Nothing more. But the words, etc., as given above, are quite plain and legible. ‘Ds’ probably stands for ‘deceased,’ or ‘died.’ It is possible that the ‘s’ may be a ‘d.’ It is the only mark that is not perfectly plain and certain.

“On page 392 of my *History of Shenandoah County, Virginia*, I give the date of Koontz’s death as 1831; but this clears it up—almost certainly the inscription is correct.”



ELDER JOHN KOONTZ’S GRAVE

CHAPTER XI

1771

JOHN WALLER WHIPPED SEVERELY BY THE SHERIFF

CULPEPER COUNTY

County Seat—Culpeper

CULPEPER

Constituted February 11, 1771

According to Morgan Edwards's manuscript *Notes*, page 20, a church called Culpeper was constituted on February 11, 1771, and is:

"So called from the county, 170 miles from Williamsburg on the water of Rapidan, near blen ledge.*—The house is 32 by 20 built in 1771 on land given by capt. McLaneghan."

The "MacLaneghan" mentioned above is evidently the "Capt. Thomas McClannahan," at whose house Mr. Ireland had the dispute with Parson Meldrum, and where stopping on his way back from Carter's Run was informed that, if he preached the next day, he would be arrested. This Culpeper church seems to have had no regularly ordained minister at the time of Mr. Edwards's visit, but depended upon two exhorters, "John Munroe" and "Thos. Payton."

In Morgan Edwards's *Volumes* it is stated of this church that "No very remarkable event hath happened since" (its organization), "except the troubles of the time common to other churches."

STAFFORD COUNTY

County Seat—Stafford

POTOMACK CHURCH

Constituted March 26, 1771

The Potomack church was constituted "Mar. 26, 1771," and Mr. Edwards's *Notes*, page 32, says that this church was:

*We suppose "blen ledge" is intended for "Blue Ridge."

"So called from the river, in the parish Overwharton, county of Stafford. * * * Two branch. One near where is a house 32 feet by 28 erected in 1768 on land given by Henry Tyler: the other at Horsepen (12 miles off) where is a house built in 1771 on land given by Arthur Morson."

This was formerly a branch of the Chappawamsick church, William Fristoe being its first pastor. Allen Wyley was dismissed from the Orange church to become a constituent member of this Potomack church.

ALLEN WILEY

Imprisoned in Orange Jail for "Some Time"

In Morgan Edwards's *Volumes*, page 11, it is stated that:

"The minister is Rev. William Fristoe who has to his assistance Mr. Allen Willey; this Wilely has been in prison for sometime at Orange for the testimony of Jesus."

The Potomack church was afterwards called Hartwood and was "situated about twelve miles west of Fredericksburg, in Stafford county. The meeting-house continued to be used until destroyed by Federal soldiers during the late war. The church was of the old school order." (Beale's *Semple* (1894), p. 207.)

William Fristoe was pastor of the Potomack church, and Morgan Edwards in his manuscript *Notes*, page 33, gives some brief and exciting comment on Mr. Fristoe's experiences at that time:

WILLIAM FRISTOE

Taken By a Warrant But Not Jailed Because He Escaped

"Taken by a warrant of Capt. Grant, but escaped to Philad. Warrant issued but not executed since. Converted at 15, by means of David Thomas. Mr. Fristoe one Original Young followed him with a gun; but escaped by flight."

Morgan Edwards's *Volumes*, pages 11 and 12 gives a fuller account of these incidents in Elder Fristoe's life, explains why

he went to Philadelphia, why the warrant was never executed, and who Mr. Original Young was. It follows:

"Mr. Wm. Fristoe has had his share of persecution. About 4 years ago he was arrested by order of Capt. Grant, but made his escape from the office and went to Philadelphia for advice how to act; the brethren there counselled him to be qualified according to the toleration act which counsel he took, and found no difficulty in the way by reason that lord Böttertöt personally interested himself in his behalf. Had this worthy governor lived the persecution of the Baptists in Virginia had been over long ago.

"At another time the sherief of the county (Mr. Original Young) pursued Fristoe with a gun in his hand in order to kill him; but Fristoe taking a by path, escaped the ledden death. This same sherief is since become a baptist; and a most humble and contrite christian he is."

WILLIAM FRISTOE

*Pursued by the Sheriff with a Gun to Kill Him.
Took a Bypath and Escaped.*

Mr. Wirt Johnson Carrington's *A History of Halifax County, Virginia* (1924), page 70, quotes the following passage:

"The *Baptist Chronicler* said: 'The dragon roared in Virginia, but he was not red—no blood for religious opinion ever stained our soil' (the soil of Virginia)."

Then on pages 266 and 267 he adds this:

"No Baptist was ever persecuted in Halifax county, though the records of Spottsylvania county show what they passed through in that county, as given in another chapter of this history. We are thankful to say no blood was spilt, no tongues split, no ears chopped off, and no punishment at the whipping post was ever practiced in the State of Virginia for any *religious* principle that we have ever discovered. The pillory, ducking stool, whipping post and jail were the modes of punishment for certain offenses and while they were strongly tingured with the 'blue laws' of Connecticut they were endurable."

1771

CAROLINE COUNTY
County Seat—Bowling Green

Look on that picture and then on this and see if Mr. Carrington is not in error about "no blood being spilt" in Virginia. The fact is much blood was spilt even in Old Virginia for "religious principle," or "religious opinion."

JOHN WALLER

*Whipped So Severely in Caroline County That He Was
in a "Gore of Blood" and Carried the Scars
to His Grave*

Morgan Edwards's *Volumes*, page 34, gives the following account of John Waller's awful experience in Caroline County. He was semi-officially whipped by the sheriff of that county until he was in a "gore of blood," and otherwise shamefully treated by the parson of the parish:

"In the spring of 1771 as he was holding divine worship in Caroline county the minister of the parish (Mr. Morton), and his clerk (Thos. Buckner) with the sherif (William Harris) came to the place. Mr. Morton rode up to the stage on which he stood and with his whip tumbled over the leaves of the book as Mr. Waller was giving out the psalm; but Waller held his thumb on the place till the whole was sung; then Mr. Waller began to pray; and his reverence Morton run the but end of his whip into Waller's mouth and silenced him. After that the clerk, Buckner, pulled him down and dragged him to the sherif who stood at a distance, the sherif immediate received him and whipped him in so violent a manner (without the ceremony of a trial) that poor Waller was presently in a gore of blood and will carry the scars to his grave. Pitty that the Bishop of London and the king do not know this that they may see what Virginia-crackers they employ instead of ministers of the gospel and an officer of justice! However, Waller sore and bloody as he was, remounted the stage & preached a most extraordinary sermon, thereby showing that beaten oil is best for the sanctuary."

In Morgan Edwards's *Notes* he states that the Sheriff used a "horse whip" on John Waller, and another account by Elder John Williams states that Waller said he received "not much less than twenty lashes."

The account by Elder John Williams referred to and which appears below was written only two weeks after Waller's inhuman treatment in Caroline and came about in a natural and interesting way. Mr. Williams was on his way to the first Separate Baptist Association that was held in Virginia and stopped for the night of Friday, May 10, 1771, at the home of Christopher (Kit) Clark, a large land-holder of Louisa County, who afterwards became a Quaker. There he fell in with seven or eight other preachers—John Waller among them—all on their way to the Association which would meet the next day at Elijah Craig's meeting-house (old Blue Run). It was natural for them to spend much time in discussing the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and John Williams was so deeply impressed with the statements of two of these brethren that he recorded them in his "Journal." He quaintly tells of "Brother Lovil informing us that the Blessed Jesus was riding victorious on the White Horse of the Gospel in many parts of the world unknown to us," and then he gives the account of Waller's experience in Caroline County as follows:

JOHN WALLER

*Jerked Off the Stage and His Head Beat
Against the Ground*

"Brother Waller informed us something of the rage of malice of the old serpent Devil, to-wit, about two weeks ago on the Sabbath Day down in Caroline County he introduced the worship of God by singing. While he was singing the Parson of the Parish would keep running the end of his horse whip in his mouth, laying his whip across the hymn book, etc. When done singing he proceeded to prayer. In it he was violently jerked off the stage; they caught him by the back part of his neck, beat his head against the ground, sometimes up, sometimes down, they carried him through a gate that stood some considerable distance, where a gentleman gave him something not much less than twenty lashes with his horse whip. After that they carried him through

a long lane. At the end thereof they stopped in order for him to dispute with the parson. The parson came up, gave him abominable ill language, and away he went with his clerk and one more. Then Bro. Waller was released, went back singing praise to God, mounted the stage and preached with a great deal of liberty. He was asked by one of us if his nature did not interfere in the time of violent persecution, when whipped, etc. He answered that the Lord stood by him of a truth and poured his love into his soul without measure, and the brethren and sisters about him singing praises to Jehovah, so that he could scarcely feel the stripes for the love of God, rejoicing with Paul that he was worthy to suffer for his dear Lord and Master."

John Waller's "blood was spilt" in this Caroline instance; Thomas Waford's "blood was spilt" at that spring in Middlesex County; Martin Kaufman's "blood was spilt" when he was clubbed with the butt end of a large cane, in Shenandoah County; Weatherford's "blood was spilt" when his hands were slashed by men of the "baser sort" as he thrust them through the iron grates of Chesterfield jail; "much blood shed" in Chappawamsick church when Charles Williams was trying to shoot the minister, and so much "blood was spilt" at another time in this same church "that the floor shone with the sprinkled blood the days following."

In Mr. Carrington's quotation from the *Baptist Chronicler* he seems to have left out a vital word, and that word was "vital." In Leland's *Virginia Chronicle*, to which Mr. Carrington doubtless refers, the quotation is as follows:

"The dragon roared with hideous peals, but was not *red*—the beast appeared formidable, but was not *scarlet-coloured*. Virginia soil has never been stained with vital blood for conscience sake."

Evidently Elder John Leland meant to convey the thought that no Virginian had lost his life in that fearful struggle. He must have known that much blood was shed, but it was not *vital* blood, in that it led to loss of life.

The Separate Baptists of Virginia, North and South Carolina, met previously for a short time in joint sessions, but at their 1770 session they unanimously agreed to separate and hold a distinct association in each one of the states. Accordingly the Virginia

messengers appointed their first session to be held at Thompson's meeting-house (Lower Goldmine), in Louisa county, on the last Saturday in September, 1771, but privately (perhaps on their way home from North Carolina), they agreed to hold "an occasional session at E. Craig's meeting-house, in Orange county, the second Saturday in May, 1771. This was designed more particularly for the purpose of forming regulations, etc."

This church—old Blue Run—was constituted December 4, 1769, and was located in the vicinity of Orange Court-house, the old building being sold to the negroes in 1876. "The present site of Blue Run meeting-house is six miles from Orange Courthouse, and three miles north of the original one." (Beale's *Semple*, p. 240.)

So the first session of the Virginia Separate Baptist Association was held with the Blue Run church, beginning on Saturday, May 11, 1771, and continuing until the following Wednesday. John Waller, John Williams, and the other ministers who spent Friday night at Christopher Clark's home in Louisa county, went on to that church on Saturday morning, arriving about one o'clock in the afternoon. John Williams estimated the number of persons present at 1,200. The Association had only fourteen churches on their list, twelve of which sent messengers. These churches were located in the following counties: Pittsylvania, Bedford, Amherst, Buckingham, Amelia, Louisa, Spotsylvania, Orange, Culpeper, Fauquier and Frederick. Four hundred and twenty baptisms were reported that year, and 1,335 persons were then under their care. A full account of this First Association of the Separate Baptists in Virginia may be found in Semple's *History* (1810), pages 49-53. Beale's *Semple* (1894), pages 489-492, contains some interesting extracts from Elder John Williams' journal that pertain to this Association.

JOHN WALLER

*Hauled About By the Hair of His Head
in Hanover County*

Attention has been called to John Waller's awful experience in Caroline County during the latter part of April, 1771, when the sheriff of the county "belaboured" him so severely with a horse whip that it left him in a gore of blood, and perhaps he went

from Caroline over into the adjoining county of Hanover, where he had another trying experience as Mr. Edwards's manuscript *Notes*, page 21, records.

"Sometime after" (that is, after his experience in Caroline), "as he was preaching at Hanover one flew at him pulling him down and halling him about by the hair of the head."

Mr. Edwards's *Volumes* gives on page 34 a more detailed account of this same incident:

JOHN WALLER

Almost Rent Asunder By Friend and Foe

"At another time while he was preaching in ———, a hugh fellow (in the habit of a waggoner) pulled him down and dragged him about by (the hair of the head); a second as stout as he ran to rescue Waller, upon which one took hold of one hand and the other of the other that between friend and foe poor Waller was like to lose both arms (the hurt stuck to him for many weeks)."

A Recipe for Making an Annabaptist Preacher

Waller and the other preachers of that day endured the most inhuman treatment and bodily suffering in order that they might make disciples for their Lord. And yet the bodily suffering and imprisonment in the county jails were not the worst features of their persecution. The bitter scorn and ridicule heaped upon them were much harder to bear than bodily pain. Take for example the following notice which appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* of October 31, 1771:

A RECIPE TO MAKE AN ANNABAPTIST PREACHER
IN TWO DAYS TIME

"Take the Herbs of Hypocrisy and Ambition, of each an Handful, of the Spirit of Pride two Drams, of the Seed of Dissention and Discord one Ounce, of the Flower of Formality three Scruples, of the Roots of Stubbornness and Obstinacy four Pounds; and bruise them altogether in the Mortar of Vain-Glory, with the Pestle of Contradiction,

putting amongst them one Pint of the Spirit of Self-conceitedness. When it is luke-warm let the Dissenting Brother take two or three Spoonfuls of it, Morning and Evening before Exercise; and whilst his Mouth is full of the Eleetuary he will make a wry Face, wink with his Eyes, and squeeze out some Tears of Dissimulation. Then let him speak as the Spirit of Giddiness gives him Utterance. This will make the Schismatick endeavor to maintain his Doctrine, wound the Church, delude the People, justify their Proceedings of Illusions, forment Rebellion, and call it by the Name of Liberty of Conscience."

BEDFORD

Constituted May 5, 1771

During the first week in May, 1771, a church was constituted in Bedford County, and Mr. Edwards's *Notes*, page 12, state that the church was:

"So called from the county where the meeting house is distant from Williamsburg 200 miles ssw." "The house is 40 feet by 20 built near *otter river* on James Davises land in 1771. The other branch is at Cottontown (dist 15 miles); another at Goole-creek 30 miles dist. where is a meeting held at Peter Holland a quaker."

"No minister, except William Lovell and Mathew Talbot & Mr. Pearman & Stephen White."

"Joined the Rapidan association in 1771."

BUCKINGHAM

Constituted May 7, 1771

Another church was organized during that first week in May—the Buckingham church, and according to Mr. Edwards's *Notes*, page 28, was:

"So called from the county—170 miles Williamsburg. Meet in a bower & seats called Casons-seats. A meeting house built 1772. * * * Minister Rane Chastain; assist. Wm. Johnston."

“They originated as a chh from Lowerspotsylvania, May 7, 1771.”

Mr. Edwards's *Volumes*, pages 40 and 41, state that the church was constituted “May 7, 1772,” and the first named page also states that the church had :

“No very remarkable things except persecutions ; and the ministry of Kit Clark who is now a Quaker by which many have been converted, but will not stick to him.”

“Kit Clark a Quaker” was, as we have seen, Christopher Clark, a large land-holder, who lived in Louisa County, and it was in his home the interesting company of ministers lodged on the night of May 10, 1771, on their way to the First Separate Baptist Association which was held at the old Blue Run church in Orange County, of which Elijah Craig was pastor.

1771

CAROLINE COUNTY

County Seat—Bowling Green

When John Waller wrote his remarkable letter from Middlesex jail, giving a graphic account of the severe trials to which he and his companions were subjected by the civil authorities he mentioned the fact that six other preachers were also confined at that time in another jail, viz., Caroline. The authorities of Caroline County were especially active at this time, for most of the imprisonments in that county of which we have any record occurred during the three months of June, July and August of 1771. There were several imprisonments a year later, and they continued their opposition and persecution for several years thereafter, but their chief activities were confined to these three months. John Young was brought before the Court at its June meeting; John Burruss, Bartholomew Choning, James Goodrich and Edward Herndon at the July Court; and Lewis Craig at the August Court. We shall treat them in the chronological order of their commitment by the Caroline authorities.

JOHN YOUNG

Imprisoned in Caroline County Jail for Five or Six Months

The first victim of the Court's displeasure was John Young, and the Caroline Order Book for 1770-1772, page 211, contains the following entry, under date of June 13, 1771:

"Edmond Pendleton	}	Gents.
John Taylor		
Walker Talliaferro		
Thomas Lowry		
Present, his Majesty's justices.		

June Court M.D. C. C. L. X. X. I.

Our Sovereign Lord the King	Presentation of
Against	Grand Jury
John Young	

"The defendent came into court and acknowledged that he preached the Gospel at Thomas Pitman's to a number of people, not having Episcopal Ordination or being licensed as a dissenting preacher Contrary to the Act of Toleration. It is therefore considered by the court that he be committed to the goal of this county and there remain till he give security himself in the penalty of fifty pounds and two securities in the sum of twenty pounds each for his good behavior a year and a daye."

Sample's *History* (1810), page 119, says that he remained in jail *four* months:

"Mr. Young was committed to jail for preaching, and there kept for four months, until he appealed to the general court, and by a writ of habeas corpus was carried to Williamsburg."

Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), page 180, makes the duration of his imprisonment *six* months:

"During the early part of his ministerial career he was one of those who passed through great tribulation for Christ's sake. He was arrested on one of his preaching excursions and committed to prison. For the space of six months he remained in close confinement in Caroline jail, until by a writ of habeas corpus he was taken to Williamsburg. In other instances this inoffensive, meek, and pious

man became the subject of unholy opposition, because he chose to obey God rather than man, and to preach Christ and him crucified to the people. None of these things deterred him from the pursuance of this great object."

How Dr. Semple arrived at the length of John Young's imprisonment as being four months, does not appear. He was tried on June 13, and carried to Williamsburg on a habeas corpus in November. If we assume that it was as late as the thirteenth of the latter month, then he would have been in jail five months. If perchance he had been in jail as much as a month before the court convened to try him—as often happened—it would make the six months mentioned by Dr. Taylor, as the duration of his imprisonment.

Among the "Extracts from the Records of Caroline County," found in the *Virginia Historical Magazine*, Vol. XX, page 319, is this reference to the manner and means used in securing his liberty:

"November, 1771.—John Young, being by virtue of a warrant brought before the court, acknowledged himself guilty of the charge in the warrant specified. It is therefore ordered that Charles Robinson, gent., Deputy King's attorney, apply to the Attorney General desiring him to prosecute the recognance entered by the said Young in the general court."

In 1908 the compiler of these historical sketches succeeded in locating a grand-daughter of John Young, in the State of Tennessee, who gave the following interesting information about her illustrious grand-father. After giving some facts about his early life, she states:

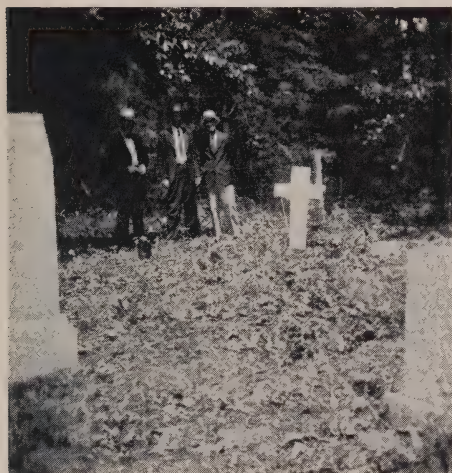
"He was converted and began preaching. He, with others, was imprisoned for preaching what he believed to be the truth. His mother, who had the care of his motherless children, visited him regularly once a week taking the children with her. Each preacher was in a room to himself. Each room had one small window, placed so high up in the wall that only a patch of the sky could be seen, nothing on the earth. The congregations of the different ministers learned, each, which was his pastor's window. Once a week John Young's congregation (and I suppose the others, too), would assemble under his window, and run up a flag, to let

him know they were there he would preach to them. In this way a great many people were converted. The authorities said, 'These heretics make more converts in jail than they do out,' so when the congregation assembled, that pastor was smoked out by burning pepper to prevent his preaching."

John Young ordained two years after his imprisonment, and at one time assistant pastor of Lower Spotsylvania church, became the pastor of "The Reeds" church, in lower Caroline County at the time of its constitution in 1773.

While Young was pastor of this church the "General Assessment" bill was revived. It was introduced into the House of Delegates in 1784 under the title of "A bill establishing provision for the teachers of the Christian religion," which if passed would have compelled every one to contribute to the support of some religious teacher; but when it reached that stage known as an engrossed bill, a motion was made and carried, that it be referred to the next Assembly in order to give the people an opportunity to consider it. The General Committee, as guardians of the rights of the Virginia Baptists, took up the matter and recommended that each county circulate a petition against it. The *original* petition from Caroline County showing the name of John Young at the head of a list of 143 signatures is being preserved in the Archives department of the Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia, and is labeled "Petition No. 1299." A copy of it may be found in this volume on page 486.

This petition was circulated thirteen or fourteen years after John Young had been incarcerated in Caroline County gaol, and shows that the old hero was still going strong in preaching and defending the Baptist position. "The Reeds" church, of which he was pastor at this time, rather languished until 1788, when sixty or seventy were added. Ten years later Elder Young moved to that portion of Albemarle County, now known as Amherst County, and the next year, 1799, became pastor of the Buffaloe church, now known as Mt. Moriah, continuing to serve them until the day of his death, April 16, 1817. He died strong in the faith and was buried in the grave-yard on his estate. After his death the home place including the grave-yard, was purchased by Mr. Charles Massie, and the grave-yard to the West continued as the Massie grave-yard. The slaves of both John Young and the



ELDER JOHN YOUNG'S GRAVE

Massie's were buried on the south side of this grave-yard and that part is still being used by the colored people. In the picture found in this volume, the paste-board cross marks approximately the place of John Young's interment while the grave-stones are in memory of Hon. Joseph Massie and Dr. Page Massie.

Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860),

page 180, has this to say about John Young's last days:

"To the end of life (which was protracted to old age) he continued a faithful servant of his Master. He was not only instrumental in the conversion of hundreds of souls, but in bringing forward into the ministry many of the most useful preachers of Virginia, who were baptized by him."

It seems that John Young and John Courtney, who was at the time of Mr. Young's death, the pastor of the First Baptist Church, in Richmond, had at some time during their lives known what it was to have "fellowship in suffering," and they had mutually pledged each other that the one surviving should preach his dead comrade's funeral. In order to keep this promise, made perhaps during a time of persecution, John Courtney traveled (we presume by horseback), all the way from Richmond to Amherst County to preach the funeral sermon of John Young. According to the custom of



MT. MORIAH BAPTIST CHURCH

that day this service may have occurred several months after John Young's death and burial. With reference to this funeral there is a bit of history which will serve as a side-light on the habits of our fore-fathers. Joseph H. Massie was a deacon in the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church in 1908, when the author of this volume was its pastor, and one day as we were talking about John Young, he conveyed the interesting information that John Young's widow had sent his father to New Glasgow to buy three gallons of whiskey for the funeral. Later Rev. John H. Massie, A. M., pastor of the Humston Baptist Church, at Edinburg, Virginia, refers to this incident in a letter to the author January 29, 1933:

"The Massie, to whom you refer, was Joseph H. Massie, a first cousin of my father. His father was Charles Massie. He, Charles Massie, was the man who went after the whiskey for the funeral of Elder John Young. He was a young married man about twenty-seven years of age at the time, and lived near Sandidges P. O., in Amherst Co. Of course, no P. O. there then."

If the reader is shocked at such an act, or has his sense of propriety wounded by the thought of a preacher taking a drink of whiskey at a funeral, and especially a funeral of another minister, it is because he is not familiar with the habits and customs of our progenitors. Drinking whiskey was the prevailing custom years ago, and in general no more was thought of it than we now think of drinking coffee or tea. It was simply a social custom that was then in vogue. The decanter was a familiar figure on many side-boards.

First Temperance Society in All the South Organized

Nearly ten years after this incident, when Abner Clopton organized the first Temperance Society in all the South, on Friday, the 27th day of October, 1826, at Ash Camp meeting-house (now Keysville), only ten persons could be found who would sign the pledge, and eight of these were ministers of the

Gospel. The article prescribing the terms of membership was as follows :

“Any sober person, whether a member of a church or not, who will consent to abstain from the habitual use of spirituous liquors, and use them as medicine only, and provided he be the head of a family, will enforce the same rule upon his children and domestics, may become a member of this society.”

Note that the pledge says, “abstain from the *habitual* use of spirituous liquors.” Many drank *habitually* in that day and thought nothing of it. The decanter on the side-board was as much a necessity as the sideboard itself, young and old, male and female, partaking of their toddy or mint julep with as much regularity as the rising of the sun. It is interesting to know how this innovation was received a hundred years ago. And Dr. Jeter, in his *Memoir of Abner W. Clopton* (1837), page 182, has left a very full and complete paragraph that will satisfy our curiosity :

“The formation of this society produced an immediate, extensive, and violent excitement. It was by the lovers of strong drink, viewed as an unrighteous combination against their liberty, and held in contempt. By good men it was contemplated with mingled emotions of suspicion and pity. ‘Vulgar wit,’ in the language of its founder, ‘the shafts of calumny, or variegated falsehood, and revengeful abuse, were employed to destroy the threatening influence of this new invention.’”

If there is the slightest doubt in the minds of any as to the piety of a man who would take a drink at his friend’s funeral, let him read this quotation from George Wythe Munford’s *Two Parsons*, on pages 40 and 41 of which he has this description of the two Courtneys :

“And we have seen some of that flock in the olden time listening with pleasure to the preaching of the venerable John Courtney, of the Baptist Church, in the old church below the Monumental; and in later days we have the word expounded by Philip Courtney, of the Methodist Church; and he also was a venerable man. And why not hear them? They were both unexceptionally holy men, working with

diligence, exhorting with simplicity, teaching as they understood the word. Venerable in appearance, cheerful in countenance, beloved by their flocks, and the words which dropped from their lips, though not sweetened with honied phrases, nor embellished with glittering imagery, were nevertheless nervous and strong, and seemed to come right from the heart, which is half the battle."

1771

FAUQUIER COUNTY

County Seat—Warrenton

Two days after John Young was hailed into court in Caroline county and given a jail sentence for preaching without license, there was a disturbance of an entirely different character in another section while the Gospel was being preached. It occurred in Fauquier County, and while Elder Daniel Fristoe was trying to examine candidates for the ordinance of baptism. Mr. Fristoe was converted and baptized by Elder David Thomas in 1755 and ordained to the regular work of the ministry on "June 14, 1771, at which time he took on him a part of the care of the church." This refers to the Chappawamsick church, in Stafford county. He did not lose any time, for the very next day, he made an entry in his diary, which has been preserved by Morgan Edwards, on page 36, of his manuscript *Notes*, where he says, in speaking of Daniel Fristoe:

DANIEL FRISTOE

Divine Services Interrupted by Curses and Silly Antics

"The following paragraph I transcribe from his diary being an account of his in-acting after ordination. 'Satur. June 15 Met the brethren where I had been preaching for some time before in Foquire. My first business was to examine candidates for baptism; as they were relating what God did for their souls one James Nayler came into the assembly and began to curse and swear and be very outrageous untill at last he blasphemed God and threw himself on the ground breaking the ground & tumbling like a fish taken out of the water untill at last one man for 10s tied him and took him away; after which the congregation (which was very numerous) had peace; and 16 persons were adjudged

proper subjects of baptism. The next day (being sunday) about 2000 people came together; after preaching, heard others that proposed to be baptized, 13 of which were deemed properly qualified. Then went to the water where I preached and baptized 29 persons. The trees about the water were so overloaded with spectators that some trees came down, but none hurt. The sight put me in mind of the story of Zacheus and found afterwards that some came down to receive it. When I had finished we went to a field and making a circle in the center, there laid hands on the persons baptized. The multitude stood round weeping, but when we sang *Come we that love the lord* & they were so affected that they lifted up their hands and faces towards heaven and discovered such chearful countenances in the midst of flowing tears as I had never seen before. In going away I looked back and saw multitudes, some roaring on the ground, some wringing their hands, some in extacies, some praying, some weeping; and other so outrageous cursing & swearing that it was thought they were really possessed of the devil. I saw strange things today &c'."

Benedict's *General History of the Baptist Denomination* (1813), page 305, gives an account of the same experience, which in substance agrees with the above though written by another:

"The following extract from Mr. Fristoe's journal, which has been preserved by Mr. Edwards, contains the most interesting account of his ministry, which I have been able to obtain; for his biography has been almost altogether neglected.

"Saturday, June 15, 1771. This day I began to act as an ordained minister, and never before saw such manifest appearances of God's working and the devil's raging at one time in one place. My first business was to examine candidates for baptism, who related what God did for their souls in such a manner as to affect many present: then the opposers grew very troublesome, particularly one James Nayler, who, after raging and railing for a while, fell down and began to tumble and beat the ground with both ends, like a fish when it drops off the hook on dry land, cursing and blaspheming God all the while; at last a gentleman offered ten shillings to any that would bind him

and take him out of the place, which was soon earned by some stout fellows who stood by. Sixteen persons were adjudged fit subjects of baptism. The next day being Sunday, about 2000 people came together; many more offered for baptism, 13 of whom were judged worthy. As we stood by the water, the people were weeping and crying in a most extraordinary manner; and others cursing and swearing; and acting like men possessed. In the midst of this, a tree tumbled down, being overloaded with people, who, Zacheus-like, had climbed up to see baptism administered; the coming down of that tree occasioned the adjacent trees to fall also, being loaded in the same manner; but none was hurt. When the ordinance was administered, and I had laid hands on the parties baptized, we sang those charming words of Dr. Watts, "*Come we who love the Lord,*" &c. The multitude sang and wept and smiled in tears, holding up their hands and countenances towards heaven, in such a manner as I had never seen before. In going home, I turned to look at the people, who remained by the water side, and saw some screaming on the ground, some wringing their hands, some in extacies of joy, some praying, others cursing and swearing, and exceedingly outrageous. *We have seen strange things today.*"

DANIEL FRISTOE

Gun Presented to His Breast; Warrants Issued

In addition to such disturbances he, too, suffered from the mob's violence that prevailed for a time in the neighborhood of the Chappawamsick church. Morgan Edward's manuscript *Notes*, page 36, contains this brief statement:

"He met with much opposition from the mob, and once had a gun presented to his breast; a warrant against him but not executed."

Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1838), page 41, gives this brief account of his last days:

"His ministerial career was brief. Having been appointed a messenger from Ketockton to the Philadelphia Association, he was, while in the last-named city, seized with the small-pox, from which he partially recovered; but before he could return home, a relapse terminated his existence. He died

at Marcus Hook, in the thirty-fifth year of his age. His remains were taken back to Philadelphia, and interred in the burial-ground of the Baptist Church. He left to mourn his loss, a wife and seven children, while his churches were deprived of a faithful and laborious pastor."

1771

CAROLINE COUNTY

County Seat—Bowling Green

It was in the neighborhood of the Tuckahoe church, changed in 1819 to Upper Zion and now located six miles from Bowling Green, that the following men were arrested and taken to jail.

BARTHOLOMEW CHONING, JAMES GOOLRICH, EDWARD HERNDON

*Imprisoned in Caroline County for Teaching and
Preaching the Gospel*

The Order Book of Caroline County contains the record of three men, who were not even preachers, but they were confined in the gaol of that county. They were evidently apprehended and imprisoned at an earlier date to await trial at the July term of court, for the record states explicitly that they were "brought into court," and after their trial the court "ordered they be remanded back to the goal." In the case of John Young, the record says, "the Defendent came into court" as if it were of his own volition, but here these laymen are "brought before the court," as if they were guarded like so many criminals. The whole account is given in Order Book for 1770-1772, on page 242, and shows their crime to have been "teaching and preaching the Gospel without having Episcopal ordination or a license from the General Court."

JULY COURT, 1771.

"Anthony Thornton	}	Gents.
John Taylor		
John Buckner		
Thomas Lowry		
William Buckner		
James Upshaw		

Present, his Majesty's justices.

July Court M. D. C. C. L. X. X. I.

"Bartholomew Choning, James Goolrich and Edward Herndon being brought before the court for teaching and preaching the Gospel without having Episcopal Ordination or a license from the General Court; ordered they be remanded to the goal of this county, & there remain till they give security, each in the sum of twenty and two security's Each in the sum of two pounds, for their good behaviour twelve months and a daye."

In 1922 a monument was unveiled at Bowling Green in commemoration of these three Baptist preachers and three laymen who were imprisoned in Caroline county, Prof. Garnett Ryland, of the University of Richmond, making the principal address, in which he paid these three laymen this tribute:

"Of Herndon and Goodrich and Chowning we know almost nothing. If it were not for their imprisonment their names would long ago have been forgotten. They were laymen whose hearts had been touched by the Spirit of God, whose lives had been changed, whose souls had been kindled, and who could not but speak the things that they had seen and heard."

JOHN BURRUS

Imprisoned for Preaching

In addition to the three laymen just mentioned, the same court in July of 1771 committed to the gaol of Caroline County a licensed but unordained preacher from the county of Spotsylvania, named John Burrus. The specific charge set down against him and for which the authorities thought he deserved imprisonment was "preaching the Gospel without Episcopal Ordination and contrary to a license granted him by the General Court, & contrary to the Act of Toleration." The laymen were imprisoned for preaching *without a license* while the preacher went to the same jail by order of the same court, although they admit in the decision rendered against him, that he had *procured a license* from the General Court. The whole procedure of the court, which is quite brief is recorded in the Order Book of Caroline county for 1770-1772, on page 242, and is as follows:

"John Burrus came into court and acknowledged that he had preached the Gospel without Episcopal Ordination, &

Contrary to a license granted him by the General Court & Contrary to the Act of Toleration. It is ordered he be committed to the Goal of this county, and there remain til he give security himself in the sum of twenty pounds & two Securities in the sum of Ten pounds each for his good behaviour twelve months & a daye."

From the bonds required of these servants of the living God, the court seemed to view the crime of preaching by a layman or a preacher as equally reprehensible for they require the same bond in each instance—"twenty pounds," but they make a difference in the amount of bond required of their securities. For the preachers' securities they name "*ten pounds*" and for the laymen's securities only "*two pounds*" each is required. They must have thought that it would be harder to get the preachers to behave for "a year and a daye" than it would be for the laymen; or, perhaps they felt that the preachers had more friends, or their friends had more money. Whatever the reason the fact remains that preachers' securities are rated higher than those of laymen.

POLE-CAT, BURRUSS AND CARMEL CHURCH

Constituted 1773

How long John Burrus was in prison is not known, but on coming out he continued to preach in the same county and enjoyed the distinction of having a church named after him. This church was in the south-western part of Caroline County, and according to Semple's *History*, page 161, was "first called Pole-cat, and the meeting-house Burrus's, after Rev. John Burrus, who was once a preacher among them, but never was ordained." In the last two decades of the eighteenth century this church was one of considerable prominence, as we find the association meeting with it in 1788, 1793 and 1797. A new meeting house was dedicated in September, 1838, at the White Oak Seats, and the name of the church changed to Carmel.

Lewis Craig was another preacher who suffered imprisonment in Caroline County during the year 1771.

In the sketch of Upper Zion church, on page 26 of Rev. J. D. McGill's *Sketches of History of the Baptist Churches Within the*

Limits of the Rappahannock Association (1850), may be found this reference to the imprisonment of Lewis Craig in Caroline County.

LEWIS CRAIG

Arrested, Required to Give Bond

"The persecution under which the Baptist preachers of that day suffered, was manifested here by the apprehension of Mr. Craig under a warrant, by virtue of which he was carried before a magistrate, to whom he gave bond, not to preach in the County for a certain period:—but thinking it better to incur the penalty of his bond, than cease from his labors, he was again apprehended and committed to prison, where he staid three months."

Another account, with additional information is to be found in an article of Dr. J. L. Burrows, published in the *Religious Herald*, of August 8, 1872:

"In 1771, Mr. Craig was again arrested, in Caroline county, where he frequently preached, (cannot some of our brethren in the Goshen Association find out from the county court records, or other sources, where this arrest was made, and the particulars connected with it?) On this occasion, when brought before the magistrate Mr. Craig was induced to give bond and security that he would not again preach in the county for a certain specified time. But, speedily convinced that he had done wrong in thus, even temporarily, compromising his liberty under Christ, he determined to forfeit his bond and bear the penalty. He returned to Caroline, and, while preaching at Mr. Reuben Catlett's plantation, he was arrested and committed to jail, where he was confined for three months."

LEWIS CRAIG

Imprisoned for Three Months in Caroline Jail

Morgan Edwards's manuscript *Notes*, page 26, mentions Lewis Craig's Spotsylvania experience, and then says: "Mr. Craig was imprisoned again at Caroline in July 19, 1771, for preaching in unlicensed places." After languishing in prison for perhaps a

month he was brought into court and the Caroline County Order Book for 1770-1772, page 255, contains the following entry with reference to his trial:

AUGUST COURT, 1771

"Edward Pendleton	}	Gents.
Walker Taliaferro		
John Armistead		
John Taylor		
Samuel Hawes		

Present, his Majesty's justices.

August Court M.D. C. C. L. X. X. I.

"Lewis Craig by virtue of a warrant from under the hand and seal of Anthony Thornton being committed to the Goal of this County, and now brought before the court and acknowledged that he had preached the Gospel without Episcopal Ordination and contrary to a license given him by the General Court. He is ordered back to the goal of this county and there to remain til he give security himself in the sum of twenty pounds & two securities in the sum of ten pounds each for his good behaviour a year and a day."

Going to jail was no new experience to Lewis Craig, for he was one of those whom the authorities had judged worthy of such treatment nearly three years before, when he and his four companions were thrust into the Fredericksburg jail. Semple's *History* says with reference to the Caroline imprisonment that, "When Mr. Craig went to jail he found Edward Herndon and B. Choning there, but being nothing more than exhorters, were soon after turned out." We are indebted to Morgan Edwards for preserving not only the exact date of his arrest and imprisonment in this Caroline instance, but also when, where and how he secured his freedom. Mr. Edwards says that he was removed "by a habeas corpus to Williamsburg on October 14," and that from this place "he was released on promise of good behaviour, provided preaching should not be construed a forfeiture of his recognizance. No reply was made to this: for I believe they were tired of him."

Mr. Craig continued to be a bright and shining light in the Baptist ministry until the day of his death. For ten years after this Caroline imprisonment in 1771 he continued to shepherd his

flock at old "Craig's" or Upper Spottsylvania, the name it bore on November 20, 1767, when it was constituted.

Dr. J. L. Burrows' article in the *Religious Herald*, of August 8, 1872, describes what happened to this church in 1781, as follows:

"In 1781, a considerable number of the members of the Spottsylvania church resolved to emigrate to Kentucky. They were regularly organized as a church, before they started, with their proper officers and with Mr. Craig as their pastor. John Taylor called it the church traveling in the wilderness. It was, in that day, a long and perilous journey. At the close of each day's journey, in the camp, and on the rest of every Lord's day, religious services were held! They settled on Gilbert's Creek, in Lincoln county and formed the first church in that region."

Rev. Fred W. Claybrook, in an article in the *Religious Herald*, says that it was in July, 1781, that Craig and his church started for Kentucky.

"Craig and his entire congregation packed their few personal belongings upon horses and wagons, and for six months they traveled through the unblazed forests of the wilderness towards the West. During the journey they suffered much because of the menace of the Indians, and for many weeks the winter weather was very severe. Undaunted by these perils, however, they kept going. Not a single service was missed. The church went with them, God directed them, and Lewis Craig led them. About the last of December, the same year, the Baptist church from Spottsylvania was planted intact as a zealous body at Gilbert's Creek, Ky."

The church at South Elkhorn, near Lexington, Kentucky, was also organized through the labors of Lewis Craig, and for many years he was its pastor. John Taylor in his *History of Ten Churches*, Second Edition (1827), pages 45 and 280, touches upon Lewis Craig's experiences in Virginia, describing his personal appearance and his style of preaching, in the following paragraphs:

"Perhaps in the month of August, 1784, I became a member of south Elkhorn Church, where I was brought under

the pastoral care of Lewis Craig, who was in the prime of life; as to the gospel ministry, of the age of between forty and fifty. Mr. Craig is yet living, and about eighty three years old; he is one of the old gospel veterans in Virginia, who often suffered imprisonment there for the crime of preaching repentance to sinners."

* * * * *

"Though he was not called a great preacher, perhaps there was never found in Kentucky, so great a gift of exhortation, as in Lewis Craig: the sound of his voice would make men tremble and rejoice. The first time I heard him preach, I seemed to hear the sound of his voice for many months. He was of middle stature, rather stoop shouldered, his hair black, thick set, and somewhat curled, a pleasant countenance, free-spoken, and his company very interesting, a great peace-maker among contending parties."

In 1795 Lewis Craig removed to Bracken County where a large church was built up under his ministry. Beale's *Revision of Semple's History* (1894), page 472, contains a brief sketch of this worthy pioneer who was incarcerated in several jails in Virginia and preached through the iron grates of the windows and door to large crowds who assembled to see and hear him. After mentioning the prominent part he played in the spread of the gospel in Kentucky, this sketch adds this statement about him:

"His noble endurance of persecution in several places in Virginia, and his leadership of Craig's church from Spotsylvania, Va., to Gilbert's Creek, Ky., through the vast forests of 1781, invest his sturdy character with a picturesque and stirring interest. He died about A. D. 1824, in the eighty-seventh year of his age, leaving an honored memory as an earnest and powerful exhorter, a sweet-spirited companion, a heavenly minded Christian, and a minister of the Cross who had endured 'hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ'."

William Cathcart's *Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, page 285, mentions the fact that Lewis Craig was imprisoned in Caroline County for three months, but does not refer to his imprisonment in

Spottsylvania County. And then he gives this account of his death:

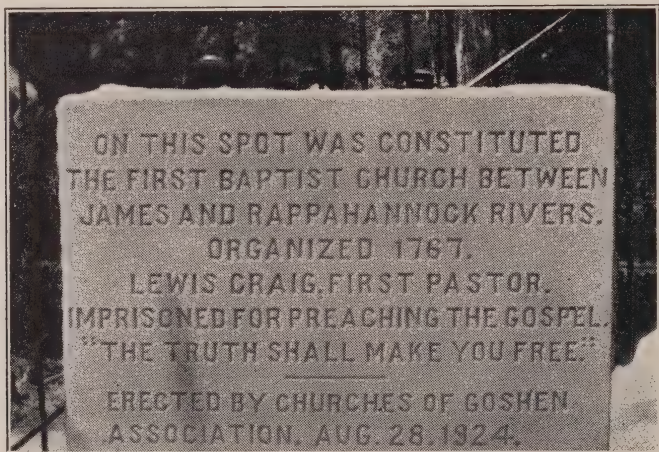
"About the year 1828 he died suddenly, of which he was forewarned, saying, 'I am going to such a house to die,' and with solemn joy went on to the place, and with little pain left the world."

The discrepancy in the dates of his death still exists, and later on it may be known whether he died in "1824," or "1828."

LEWIS CRAIG

*Monument proposed in His Memory in Kentucky,
But Never Erected. One Was Erected in Virginia.*

When the Bracken Association of Baptists met at Millersburg, Kentucky, in August, 1909, steps were taken towards the erection



SITE OF OLD CRAIG'S BAPTIST CHURCH
(First Building)

of a monument over the grave of Lewis Craig, who lies buried near Minerva, in Mason County, Kentucky. Rev. Lewis N. Thompson wrote a ninety-page book, the proceeds from the sale of which were to be applied in erecting this monument, but the monument never became a reality.³

The Goshen Association in Virginia *did* erect a handsome marble monument on the site of the original Craig's building,

which is near the present (1932) old church building. This "Old Craig's Church" was about twenty miles from Orange Courthouse, and a picture of it as it appeared in 1924 may be found in this volume. This monument is in commemoration not only of Lewis Craig, but also of the *first* Baptist church in that neighborhood, and therefore bears the following inscription:

"ON THIS SPOT WAS CONSTITUTED
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH BETWEEN
JAMES AND RAPPAHANNOCK RIVERS.
ORGANIZED 1767.
LEWIS CRAIG, FIRST PASTOR.
IMPRISONED FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL.
'THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.'

ERECTED BY CHURCHES OF GOSHEN
ASSOCIATION, AUG. 28, 1924."

The record shows that Lewis Craig and four others were arrested in the yard of this old church, and bound over in the sum of 1,000 pounds to appear in court two days later to answer the heinous charge "as disturbers of the peace."

The marker was unveiled on August 28, 1924, by Misses Nannie Massey and Florence Gibbs Swift, and the principal addresses were made by Dr. H. W. Battle, of Charlottesville; Dr. J. W. Cammack, of Richmond, and Rev. E. L. Swift, of Fredericksburg, all of whom remarked upon the significance of the efforts of Lewis Craig and that galaxy of pioneer Baptist preachers in Virginia, who did so much for Religious Liberty in their own State and in the world.

The location of the present (1932) Craig's church is about three miles west of the old site over in Orange County, and is situated two miles east of Mine Run Post Office on the main highway to Spotsylvania Courthouse.

Magistrates Who Persecuted the Baptists

In the cases of Lewis Craig, James Ware and James Pitman, who were imprisoned in Caroline, we know the authority upon which they were arrested. It was in conformity to "a warrant

from the hand and seal of Anthony Thornton." But in none of the other cases in this county has the name of the Magistrate, or Justice of the Peace, been preserved. However, the name of John Taylor appears in every instance as one of the "Gentlemen Justices" of his Majesty. He and Anthony Thornton may have been the chief instigators in the apprehension and conviction of these inoffensive men of God. They must have been zealous churchmen and may have believed, with the Apostle Paul, that they were verily doing God a service when they were persecuting the saints. John Taylor and Anthony Thornton of Caroline; Archibald Cary of Chesterfield; Zachariah Taliaferro of Amherst; Arnold of Culpeper; Capt. Scott of Fauquier; Col. Broadwater of Fairfax; and Philip Montague of Middlesex—the names of these men have been preserved in connection with the drastic measures adopted in that early day to suppress the Baptist preachers and the Baptist message. Of some of these magistrates we know very little except in connection with the arrest and imprisonment of our Baptist brethren in the various jails of the Colony. Perhaps some of them will be like Torregiano, to whom Michael Angelo said: "You will be remembered only as the man who broke my nose," for some of these magistrates are remembered only as the men who were chiefly instrumental in persecuting our preachers.

*Six Baptists in Caroline County Gaol Attract the Attention
of the Authorities at the Colonial Capital*

The preachers and laymen in Caroline County jail in 1771 seem to have attracted the attention of some one who undertook, in a lengthy "Address," to explain the law under which they were arrested and imprisoned. This elaborate dissertation on the legality of the course pursued by the petty officers of the land with reference to these inoffensive Baptist preachers is addressed to the "Annabaptists" imprisoned in Caroline County, August 8, 1771." The "Address" was printed in the *Virginia Gazette*, of February 20, 1772, and one wonders why this delay of six months in giving it to the public.

There were six Baptists in Caroline jail on "August 8, 1771," viz., John Young, Lewis Craig, John Burrus, Bartholemew Chon-

ing, or Chewning, James Goodrich, or Goolrich, and Edward Herndon; three preachers and three laymen.

The "active upright Magistrate" who was responsible for the commitments of most of these men must have been John Taylor, but it is not yet known who the "champion" of the Baptists was who wrote this magistrate a letter "consigning him to perdition" for persecuting these men.

There is nothing to indicate who the author of this "Address" was except the address itself. Presumably it was written by the Attorney General of the Colony, who was at that time John Randolph, Jr., and the supposition is based solely upon the internal evidence. It was evidently written at the Colonial Capital, Williamsburg.

Not the slightest reference to this "Address" in any of our histories has been found, but it is an interesting document and shows great care in its preparation. It also shows how the authorities regarded their prisoners in Caroline jail at that time, as well as those confined in other Virginia jails. The address follows:

"An ADDRESS to the ANABAPTISTS imprisoned
in Caroline County, August 8, 1771.

"Though I have, upon former Occasions, endeavored to explain the Reason and Legality of the proceedings against you, yet I find Doubts remain with you, and others, whether your Imprisonment be legal; and you have, I hear, desired to see the Law by which you are condemned. This is what you have a Right to, and in which I propose to give you Satisfaction; though the conduct of one of your champions, in daring, by Letter to the Gentleman who has been discharging the Duty of an active upright Magistrate, in most of your Commitments, to consign him to Perdition, as your Persecutor for that Conduct, might provoke another Kind of Treatment. But we have learned another Spirit, from the Charity of that Church we profess ourselves Members of; and while you, magnifying yourselves into Prophets and Apostles, threaten us with the Fate of a Pharaoh, Zedekiah, Darius, and Herod, we feel no Resentment but that Pity and Compassion for your Mistake and Sufferings, wishing you to rectify the former, and thereby avoid the latter.

“To justify your Commitment, we first recur to the common Law, or that Law founded on the original Compact by which Societies are formed, or resulting from the unchangeable Nature of Things. That ‘Men could not live without Society’ was a Lesson very early learned, from the Depravity of our Nature, which exposed the Weak a Prey to the Strong; left every Man at the Mercy of him that was mightier, and soon filled the World with Fraud and Violence. To remedy this, Men associated together under a Compact, to stand by and support each other’s Rights, introduced Rules for their common Conduct, under the Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments, to enforce the Observation of them, and submitted to Government to distribute those Sanctions. From hence it is evident that every Member of a Community is obliged to submit to such Laws as are made for the Good of the Whole, however contrary to his Inclination or Interest, which he must give up to the Opinion or Interest of a Majority.

“When a Legislature is fixed, they have the Power of judging what Laws will best promote the true Ends of Society, and Submission becomes the Duty of all other Members; which may surely be more cheerfully allowed in our happy Constitution, where a Part of them are chosen by ourselves, are subject to be changed as often as they betray their Trust and their Injuries removed. This Legislature would meet in a new Society to very little Purpose if they did not form a *religious* as well as a *civil* Establishment, not only because their Union has ever been found necessary to support Government, but that a State could not expect to thrive which should seem to rely on her own Strength, by providing State Regulations only, without endeavoring to Conciliate the Divine Favour, by establishing Modes of Piety and Devotion. To these religious Establishments it becomes the Duty of every good Member of Society to submit; and an opposition to them must be considered as Heresy and Schism, and a Breach of the Laws.

“I do not mean to exclude Toleration to scrupulous Consciences: I am for that upon the broadest Bottom a due Regard to the Public Peace will admit of: but of that the Legislature are to judge, and to fix its Limits, to which Dissenters must conform.

“I would also desire not to be misunderstood in these my Notions of Heresy: The private Opinions of Men are not

the Objects of Law or Government: while they keep those to themselves, they may enjoy them without Interruption from the civil Magistrate. But if they go about publicly preaching and inculcating their Errours, raising Factions tending to disturb the publick Peace, or utter Doctrines which in their Nature are subversive of all Religion or Morality, they become obnoxious to civil Punishment.

"That you may not rely on my Word for this, I will read you some Authorities in Support of it. (*New Abridgment*, Volume 3d, 37th.) The Author treating of Offences against Religion, as punishable by the Common Law, says: "Although Offences against

"Religion are, strictly speaking, of ecclesiastical Co-
"nunsance, yet where a Person, in Maintenance of
"his Errours, sets up Conventicles, or raises Factions
"which may tend to disturb the publick Peace, or
"where the Errours are of such a Nature as subvert
"all Religion and Morality, which are the Founda-
"tion of Government, they are punishable by the
"temporal Judges with Fine and Imprisonment, and
"also such other corporal infamous Punishment as to
"the Court in Discretion shall seem meet, according
"to the Heinousness of the Crime, lest the Publick
"should suffer a Detriment."

Among the Instances of such pernicious Doctrines he put these, "Impostors in Religion,
"as falsely pretending to extraordinary Com-
"missions from God, and terrifying or abusing
"the People with false Denunciations of
"Judgments, &c."

"Seditious words in Derogation of the established
"Religion are indictable, as tending to a Breach of
"the Peace; such as these, your Religion is a new
"Religion, and preaching is not prattling, and prayer
"once a Day is more edifying."

Trasker's Case, Hobart, 236. "He, being a
"Minister, was charged with holding Opinion
"that the Jewish Sabbath ought to be observed, and not ours,
"and that we ought to abstain from all Manner of
"Swine's Flesh. Being examined upon these Things
"he confessed that he divulged these Opinions,
"and had laboured to bring as many to his Opinion
"as he could; and had also written a Letter to the

“King, wherein he did seem to tax his Majesty of
 “Hypocrisy, and did expressly inveigh against the
 “Bishops High Commissioners, as bloody and cruel in
 “their Proceedings against him, and a Papal Clergy.
 “Now he, being called Oretenus, was sentenced to
 “Fine and Imprisonment, not for holding those Opi-
 “nions, (for those were examinable in the ecclesiastical
 “Courts, and not here) but for making of Conven-
 “ticles and Factions by that means, which may tend
 “to Sedition and Commotion, and for scandalizing the
 “King, the Bishops, and the Clergy.”

“Here you see plainly that you are liable to be indicted, fined, and imprisoned, nay, if we had that persecuting Spirit we are charged with, we might have gone farther, and added infamous corporal Punishment, instead of which we only endeavour to prevent these Mischiefs in future, by requiring Security for your good Behaviour, fairly letting you know that preaching at Houses or Places not licensed will be considered as a Breach of your Bond: and your Imprisonment is your own seeking, as it is only in Consequence of your obstinately refusing to give this Security.

“But you say for yourselves, that you have a Call from God to preach, and deny that your Doctrines or Practicies are hurtful to Society. As to your Call, produce your Credentials; and, I will engage for the Court, they shall not be opposed.

“Those Prophets and Apostles whom you pretend to imitate gave Proofs of their divine Mission in the Miracles they wrought, which could only be performed by the Power of God. Of this kind you give us none. Have we Reason to expect, and therefore from Probability to believe, any such Calls? We are told that false Prophets will come, but no Hint given that we are to look for any true Ones.

“And for what should you be called? Have you a new Redeemer to preach, or a new Revelation of Gods Will to make to the World? You do not pretend it, but only that you are to preach that Saviour and explain those Scriptures with which the World have been acquainted for upwards of seventeen Hundred Years. Can you pretend to be better acquainted with them than others of as good Opportunities, having them in their Houses, and who will probably read them with cooler Heads, and be less liable to Errours? Can you be so well able to expound them as those Teachers provided by the

State, who have educations suited to such Work, and have no Interest in deceiving us; and therefore we cannot suspect them of such an Inclination?

"You have no Evidence of the Call then but your bare Words, which this Court cannot take as Evidence, of which a few Instances of the Inconveniences must satisfy you: A Debtor may pretend an invisible Prohibition against paying his Debts; must we therefore not give Judgment against him? Offenders of every Kind may attempt to screen themselves by the same Pretence; and should one of them do Violence to your Person or Properties, and endeavor to evade Justice by such a Pretence, you would no Doubt expect the Court to disregard them, as they undoubtedly would do, and must, upon the same Ground, reject your Plea of a divine Call, for which you have no Evidence, and proceed as the Law directs us, in which we adopt a Piece of Advice I would recommend to you, and those who may incline to follow you, "Be-

"loved, believe not every Spirit, but try them whether they be of God, since many false Prophets
"are gone out into the World."

"But you say you do no Harm. Let us try the Tree by its Fruits, and see if you are not mistaken in this Point. Do you not denounce eternal Punishment upon all who die unconverted? What do you mean here by Conversion? Not from Idolatry, or Paganism, to Christianity. Those you apply to are already, or pretend to be Christians; I own I can fix no Meaning to this Term as you use it, but their foresaking the established Church and becoming of your Opinion. Here then you impiously wrest the Power of Judgment from him to whom it belongeth, and condemn Man for only differing in Opinion from you. By this means you terrify and frighten many honest, and, I will add pious Men, to forsake their Church and the cheerful innocent Society of their Friends and Families, and turn sour, gloomy, severe, and censorious to all about them. Wives are drawn from their Husbands, Children from their Parents, and Slaves from the Obedience of their Masters. Thus the very Heartstrings of those little Societies which form the greater are torn in sunder, and all their Peace destroyed.

"And what is the Good you pretend to give us in Exchange for all this Mischief? Why, you and your Followers, Pharisee like, appear unto Men to pray, and be more righteous

than your Neighbors; but, in Reality, have only exchanged orderly, pure, and rational Worship, for Noise and Confusion.

"As by the former Doctrine you *frighten* People into your Sect, so you *encourage* them by another equally destructive to Society, that is, 'that after Conversion a Man cannot sin unto Death'; by which you take off all religious Restraints from Men of abandoned Principles, who, having been once dipped in your happy Waters, are let loose to commit upon us Murders, and every Species of Injury, when they can do it secretly so as to avoid temporal Punishment.

"These may serve as a few of the many Instances in which your Doctrines and Practices tend to disturb, if not to sap, the very Foundations of Society, and will fully justify the Proceedings against you. Indeed your publick Preaching at all as Dissenters subjects you to worse Punishment by the common Law than we have attempted, unless it be true that you are exempted and justified by the Act of Toleration, which you claim the Benefit of; and I am one among the few Lawyers in the Country who think you are entitled to all the Benefit of that Act, provided you comply with the Terms of it. I will endeavor to state the Matter faithful to you. It was in the Reign of Edward VI that the Book of Common Prayer and church Liturgy was established, and an Act passed for Conformity to it; but as it was abolished by his Popish Succesour Queen *Mary*, we date our religious Establishment from a Statue made 1st of Elizabeth, Chapter 2d.

By the Statute, "the Book of Common Prayer
"and Church Liturgy was to be used in all Places of
"Worship; and every Person was to resort to his
"Parish Church every Sunday and Holiday, under
"the Penalty of twelve-pence, and Church Cen-
"sures."

By the 23d of *Elizabeth*, Chapter 1st. "the Pen-
"nalty is increased to twenty Pounds a Month for not
"going to Church; and the Non-Conformist may be
"continued bound to his good Behaviour from Time
"to Time, in the Penalty of two Hundred Pounds."

By the 28th of *Elizabeth*, Chapter 6th, and the
3d of *James*, Chapter 4th, "an Offender convicted
"for the Penalty of twenty Pounds a Month for not
"going to Church shall from thenceforth pay twenty

"Pounds a Month, until he conforms by coming to
"Church; and the King is empowered to seize two
"Thirds of his Lands, and Goods, in Satisfaction."

By the 31st of *Elizabeth*, Chapter 1st, "obstinate
"Non-Conformists were compellable to abjure the
"Realm, and subjected to other Penalties."

"And in the 17th and 22nd of *Charles II.* were Statutes
still more severe against Dissenters, who had some Time
before, under the Mask of Religion brought their King to
the Block, and overturned the Constitution.

"Thus stood the Law when the Statute was made commonly called 'The Act of Toleration,' and from that Title is supposed to be an universal Indulgence to Men to be of what Religion, or to practice what Mode of Religion, their Whims may suggest, and to make Converts to their Visions, running to and fro and uttering them, and disturbing Society as much as they please. But this will appear to be a Mistake. That Statute, the 1st of *William and Mary*, Chapter 18th, is entitled "An Act for exempting their Majesties Subjects, dissenting from the Church of England, from the Penalties of certain Laws;" and enacts, "that all Dissenters shall be exempted from the Penalties of the several Statutes before mentioned, and all others about Religion, provided they take the Oaths to Government, and make a Declaration against Transubstantiation, the Invocation of Saints, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, and come to some Congregation for Religious Worship, in a Place registered in the Bishop's Court or Quarter Sessions, the Doors whereof shall not be locked, barred, or Bolted."

"Teachers are to be qualified by taking the Oaths to Government, making the same Declaration, and subscribing Part of the thirty nine Articles. Quakers allowed to make a Declaration of Fidelity &c. instead of Oaths."

By an Act of Assembly, made in 1705, "if any Person shall absent himself from Church one Month (excepted as is excepted in an Act of Parliament &c. and so gives the Title of the Act of Toleration) they shall be fined, &c."

"This appears to me to enforce that Act here, and entitles Dissenters to the Benefit of it; but then they are to consider

that Act as an Exemption only upon Condition; You must perform the Condition before you can claim the Exemption; that is, among other Qualifications, you must preach and assemble at registered or licensed Houses only.

"Those Gentlemen who think the Toleration Act not in force here found their Opinion upon our having no Bishop, Deacon, Archdeacon, or Quarter Sessions, to receive the Qualifications and do the other Things required by the Act; but this I think no Objection, the Legislature having adopted the Act in general, and not pointed out the particular Power to execute the Law: It belongs to the General Court, as the Supreme Court of Justice here, and having Jurisdiction over all Persons and all causes, and to them only, to receive your Qualifications and license your Houses, until the Legislature shall direct another Mode.

"The General Court have exercised this Power, and while none but qualified Teachers assume that Office, and they meet only at licensed Houses, you will meet with Protection, and not Interruption, from Magistracy here; but as often as you break those Limits, and *every* One undertakes to preach *every Where*, you may expect to be proceeded against as the Law directs, and can derive no Advantage from the Act of Toleration.

"You complain of not having Houses enough licensed; of that it is not our Province to judge. Not having Jurisdiction given us by Law, you must apply again to the General Court; if you think they are not liberal enough, you must represent it to the Legislature, and not make *yourselves* your own Judges of what is fit to be done.

"I have thus endeavored to lay before you a View of the whole Law on the subject, and am desirous you shall call on the Gentlemen of the Bar to say whether my Exposition is just and sound. We are ready also to hear you, and will then determine whether you can be discharged without giving Security for your good Behaviour, according to a former Order."

Perhaps the last paragraph is intended as a reply to their appeal to the General Court. Whoever the writer was, he says:

"We are ready also to hear you, and will then determine whether you can be discharged without giving Security for your good Behaviour, according to a former Order."

When the writer said: "We are ready also to hear you," he evidently meant that the General Court was ready to hear John Young and Lewis Craig (and perhaps others), who were carried to Williamsburg on a *habeas corpus* and released.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Urbanna the County Seat Then—Saluda Is Now

When the gospel as preached by Baptists reached Amelia County, William Mullen, who was originally from Middlesex, embraced it, and in the year 1769 visited his relatives down in Middlesex and Essex counties. And "by arguments, drawn from the scriptures, he convinced his brother John, and his brother-in-law, James Greenwood, with several others of the necessity of being born again. Of these, some found peace in believing, before they ever heard the gospel publicly preached. November 1770, John Waller and John Burrus, came down and preached in Middlesex. They continued preaching at, and near the same place, for three days; great crowds came out; Waller baptized five. Persecution began to rage. Some said they were deceivers; others that they were good men. On the second day, a magistrate attempted to pull Waller off the stage, but the clergyman of the parish prevented it. The next day, a man threw a stone at Waller while he was preaching; the stone missed Waller and struck a friend of the man that threw it. James Greenwood and others now began to hold public meetings, by day and by night. . . . Much good was done by them; many believed, and only waited an opportunity to be baptized, there being no ordained preacher nearer than Spotsylvania." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 13.)

These Baptist pioneers must have prosecuted their work with the greatest diligence since the results were sufficient to stir the people greatly and to arouse the authorities to their utmost to quench the truth, put a stop to the activities of these preachers and thereby prevent them from acquiring a following. The court records bear conclusive evidence of the strenuous exertions of the petty officers in this direction.

As early as 1703 the civil authorities seem to have scented trouble of this kind in the colony, and an inquiry was sent out by the "Councill," presumably to every county in the colony. It

was certainly sent to the county of Middlesex and since there was no special reason for singling her out it is therefore probable that all the other counties received the same "Order of Councill." In this County's Order Book, Number 3 (1694-1705), page 538, this significant entry occurs:

"1703. In pursuance of an Order of Councill dated the 27th day of Aug. 1703, this court returns the following answer.

"That there is noe seperate Congregation or religious meetings of any persons dessenting from the Church of England within this county. Nov. 1, 1703.

* * * * *

Justices present

Matthew Kemp
Wm. Churchhill

John Smith
Henry Beverley, Gentlemen."

Perhaps they thought then and continued to think for years thereafter that they were resting in peace, and that like Judah and Israel of old they "dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba."

In 1704 there was great agitation also in the neighboring State of Carolina, but from a different cause. While the authorities in Virginia seemed apprehensive of a falling away from the Establishment, the Carolinians were aroused because of an attempt to bring that province under the authority of the Church of England.

The year 1705 is memorable in the history of Virginia being the year that her Governor, Francis Nicholson, acted like a rufian toward the minister of the parish. He had fallen passionately in love with a young lady at the Capital, and being rejected declared he meant "to cut the throats of three men: the bridegroom, the minister, and the justice who issued the license." He became so angry especially with the minister, that he assaulted him on the street in Williamsburg and knocked his hat off his head.

Governor Alexander Spotswood came to Virginia in June 1710, bringing with him the great writ of *habeas corpus*, which we have seen was very useful to several imprisoned Baptist preachers some years later. This Governor was received by Virginians with

open arms; the Burgesses passed him a vote of thanks; appropriated 2,000 pounds to build him a "Palace"; and he wrote home to England:

"This government is in perfect peace and tranquility, under a due obedience to the royal authority, and a *gentlemanly conformity to the Church of England.*"

We have seen from the Middlesex County records that the people of that county were in 1703 "conforming" to the Church of England. But about sixty-five years later, in 1769 and 1770 there came men, who like the apostles of old may have caused the rulers to cry out, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." Certain is it that beginning 1771 and continuing through 1772 and 1773, there are numerous presentments by the grand jury of those in that county, who, having learned a new way had dared to absent themselves from the parish church.

At first the Baptists were objected to because of the pernicious doctrines they were said to proclaim, and their preachers were deemed false prophets, a set of wolves in sheep's clothing. But these flimsy arguments were so tactfully met by our ministers that they were soon abandoned.

"But the enemy not contented with ridicule and defamation, manifested their abhorrence to the Baptists in another way; by a law then in force in Virginia, all were under obligation to go to church several times in the year; the failure subjected them to a fine.

"Little notice was taken of the omission, if members of the established church; but so soon as the new-lights were absent they were presented by the grand jury, and fined according to law; whether such fine was ever collected or not we cannot certainly say—however, the attempt to make them pay appeared very unreasonable. What, compelled to attend the church whose worship they could not join, and the ministry deficient—they could receive no advantage from it, and languish for want of gospel food, food calculated to refresh and strengthen the soul—it was burthensome and disagreeable to be compelled to pay our proportion of the parson's sixteen thousand pounds of tobacco, but to be fined in addition to that, to pay for not going to church,

was distressing." (Fristoe's *History of the Kettocton Baptist Association* (1808), pp. 69, 70.)

The County Court for Middlesex, Monday, May 27, 1771, was presided over by His "Majesty's Justices" and the account of that session is found in the Order Book for that year, pages 358 and 359:

"Present Majestys Justices

James Mills	Maurice Smith	Gentlemen.
Edmond Berkeley	Philip Montague	

"The grand jury made presentments as followeth, to wit. We present Gawin Corbin, Esquire for willfully absenting himself from Divine Service at his Parish church or chapel for the space of one month, James Machan for the same, William Mullins for the same Robert Ware for the same, George Warwick for the same, Catherine Wife of Hugh Walker for the same Judith Wake for the same; James Deagle for the same, William Deagle for the same, Edward Wilson and ——— his wife for the same Christopher Robinson for the same, Thomas Bernet for the same James Bennett for the same Thomas Lee for the same; We do also present Hannah Wood for having a Bastard Child, Catherine French for the same, and we do also present the Overseer of the Road Leading from Urbanna to the Glebe. And then the Grand Jury having nothing further to present were discharged."

From this Grand Jury report it will be seen that out of eighteen presentments, fifteen were for "not going to church." That was indeed a strange age in which our Baptist forefathers lived. Some were fined and imprisoned for "going to church" and "preaching the gospel," and *many others*, both men and women, were presented and fined for "not going to church."

At the next County Court held on Monday, June 24, 1771, we have an account in the same Order Book of the disposition that was made of these presentments as follows:

"Present his Majestys Justices

Garwin Corbin	Robert Spratt and	Gentlemen."
James Mills	Augustine Smith	

On page 386 Christopher Robinson's case is mentioned and as he was not present he was fined, and this entry made :

"Upon the Presentment of the Grand Jury against James Deagle, James Mckan George Warwick, Thomas Bennett, William Mullins, Edward Wilson and ——— his wife for their wilfully absenting themselves from Divine Service at their Parish church or chapel for the space of one month, The defendants appearing and making their Excuse, It was ordered that they be discharged from their presentments."

Gawin Corbin appears as one of his Majesty's Justices, but he was also fined.

On page 387 this entry appears :

"John Dillard, Overseer of the Road leading from Urbanna to the Glebe, For not keeping the said Road in repair according to Law. The Deft, being duly summoned and not appearing though solemnly called, It is considered that he make his Fine with our Lord the King by the Payment of Fifteen shillings and the costs."

Thomas Lee was fined and James Bennett fined, then they disposed of Robert Ware's case in the following way :

"Upon the Presentment of the Grand Jury against Robert Ware for wilfully absenting himself from Divine Services at his Parish Church or Chapel for the space of one month

"The Deft being duly summoned and not appearing though solemnly called. It is considered that for his said offence he make his Fine with our Lord the King by the Payment of Five shillings, and the costs."

Hannah Wood fined Twenty shillings and the costs.

Catherine French not summoned, so continued.

And William Deagle was fined.

It was nothing more than might have been expected of those persons who had been presented and fined at several different courts to seek redress for the wrongs they suffered for not attending the services of the Established Church. So they drew up a petition, which was signed by a dozen men, and presented it at

this same June term of the court. This original petition has been preserved, is now in the possession of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society (University of Richmond, Virginia), and reads as follows:

"To the worshipful the court of Middlesex County.

"We the petitioners humbly beseech your worships to grant and Establish a place for the publick worship of the Dissenters at James Mackan according Law for the peacable Communion of the Christian worship and your petitioners ever prayeth.

Robt. Ware
James Mackan
John Owen
George Worwick
Edward Ware
Charles Medery
John Worwick
John Greenwood
John Meacham
Jer. Shepard
Henry Shepard
Wm. Mullins."

This petition bears the following endorsement:

"The Petition of Robt. Ware and others for to Establish a place of Publick Worship—

"1771. June Rejected."

The Middlesex County Court record of this petition is found in Order Book for 1769-1772, on page 376, for the County Court, June 24, 1771, and is as follows:

"1771. At a Court held for Middlesex County at the Court House in Urbanna on Monday the twenty sixth Day of August in the Eleventh Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third by the Grace of God of Great Britian, France and Ireland, King Defender of the Faithful, and in the year of our Lord Christ one thousand seven hundred and seventy one.

"Present his Majestys Justices.

James Mills
Edmond Berkeley

Maurice Smith and
Philip Montague

Gentlemen.

“On the petition of Robert Ware and others professing themselves Protestant Dissenters to Establish a Place of Publick Worship for them in this County, the Court being of opinion they have no authority to appoint such place, the said Petition is rejected.”

The Middlesex officials were following the usual course in thus rejecting this petition. It was agreed that the General Court alone, had the authority to license places of worship, and after all the preliminaries had been complied with, the long and tedious journey made to Williamsburg, the Colonial Capital, a license, if granted at all, was done in an arbitrary and capricious manner.

JOHN WALLER, JAMES GREENWOOD, ROBERT WARE,
WILLIAM WEBBER

Imprisoned in Middlesex Jail for Forty-six Days

The petition of Robert Ware and others was rejected on June 24, 1771, and a month and a half later, or, on August 10, 1771, John Waller came down into upper Middlesex, from his home in Spotsylvania, on a preaching tour, accompanied by a young preacher, William Webber, who during the preceding March had been set free from an imprisonment of three months in the Chesterfield gaol. But they soon found that there was not much chance to proceed for while a meeting was in progress in the home of James Mackan, a warrant was issued, and a magistrate dispatched with seemingly great haste to arrest them. The *original* warrant issued for the arrest of these men has been preserved, is now the property of our Virginia Baptist Historical Society (University of Richmond, Virginia), and reads as follows:

“Middlesex county to wit:

“Philip Montague one of his Majesty’s Justices of the Peace of the said County.

“To the Sheriff or any Constable of ye county afores’d. Whereas it hath appeared to me by information of William Montague that John Waller, Robert Ware, James Greenwood, William Webber, Richard Faulkner and Thomas Waffer, are this day present at the house of James McKan in this County at a conventicle or unlawful assembly of many

To a Court of
 John Walter, Robert Ware, James Thompson and William
 Mosher who were committed to the goal of this County by
 virtue of a Warrant and Subpoena from a ^{Magistrate} ~~Magistrate~~ ^{Justice} ~~Justice~~
 one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for this County, for
 disturbing and preaching the gospel ~~without authority~~
~~without authority and without licence~~ in the town of ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~the~~
 in England were brought into Court and confessed the fact
 but justified their conduct as being Independent Dissenters.
 Whereupon the Court having fully heard them on their own
 defence, and mature Deliberation being thereupon had, and it
 appearing that they had not qualified themselves as Preachers
 either according to the Laws of this Kingdom or of great Britain
 or the Canons of the Church of England, It is Ordered that
 they and each of them be remanded to the goal of this
 County, there to remain until they shall severally enter
 into recognizance with two Sureties each, themselves on
 the sum of £50 each and their Sureties in the sum of £25
 each Upon Condition that they shall severally & respectively
 be at good behaviour for the space of six months the next
 ensuing.

A COPY OF THE ORIGINAL MIDDLESEX WARRANT

Persons exceeding the number of Ten, besides the household of the said James McKan, there met together under the pretense of the exercise of Religion in other maner than according to the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of England. And they, the said John Waller, Robert Ware, James Greenwood, William Webber, Richard Faulkner and Thomas Wafer, have at other time and places taken upon themselves to Preach and Teach to the Persons, so unlawfully assembled, not having Episcopal Ordination to Teach or Preach the Gospel, according to the Canons of the Church of England, neither have they, professing themselves to be Protestant Teachers or Preachers, dissenting from the said Church of England, qualified themselves to Teach or preach as such according to the directions of An Act of Parliament of England, made in the first year of King William and Queen Mary intituled an act for exempting their Majesty's Protestant Subjects disssenting from the sd Church of England from the Penalties of certain Laws, nor is the house of the said James McKan a Place (for) the meeting or Congregation of Protestant Dissenters for Religious Worship according to the directions of the said act of Parliament; and they the said John Waller, Robert Ware, James Greenwood, William Webber, Richard Faulkner and Thomas Wafer do labour and persuade many Persons in Communion with the Church of England to dissent from the same and utter doctrines Distructive of the Peace of Society to the subversion of all Religious establishment, the exciting and raising Factions in the minds of his Majesty's Subjects contrary to the laws of this Colony and against the Peace of our Lord the King, his Crown and Dignity.

"You are hereby, therefore, required to take the said John Waller, Robert Ware, James Greenwood, William Webber, Richard Faulkner and Thomas Wafer and Carry them before some Justice of this County to answer the Premises that they may be dealt with according to Law.

"Given under my hand and seal this 10th day of August 1771.

Philip Montague (Seal)."

The circumstances under which this warrant was served is recorded in Semple's *History*, page 17:

"While William Webber was preaching from these words, 'Shew me thy faith, without thy works, and I will shew you

Middlesex Co.

James Montague one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace
of the said County.
To the Sheriff or Keeper of the goal of this
County aforesaid.

I send you herewith the Bodies of Robert Waller, Robert
Ware, James Greenwood and William Waller taken this day and
brought before me who have charged with a lawfully sworn
Themselves at the house of James Mason in this County and bidden
upon them to Teach or Preach the Gospel under the pretence of the
exercise of Religion in other manner than according to the doctrine
of the Church of England and they not having Episcopal Ordination to
Teach or Preach the same according to the Canons of the said Church of
England, and not having they professing themselves to be Protestant
Teachers or Preachers dissenting from the said Church of England.
I cited themselves as such according to the direction of an Act
of the Parliament of England made in the first year of King
William and Queen Mary. And a Statute for punishing their
Majesty's Protestants who dissenting from the Church of England
from the Penalties of certain Laws, and for punishing persons
many Persons in Communion of the Church of England to dissent
from the same and for raising factions in the minds of dissenting
subjects contrary to the Laws of this Colony and Against the Peace
of our Lord the King his Crown and Dignity. That the said Robert
Robert Ware, James Greenwood and William Waller upon their
trial and examination by me had and taken declare they
have no Power or Authority from which they stand charged to
from above. Therefore I have by reason you to receive them into
your Custody and then safely keep in the goal of the said
County until they shall be discharged in due course of Law
Given Under my hand and Seal this 10 day of August 1697

James Montague

A COPY OF THE ORIGINAL MITTIMUS FOR CONVEYING THE BODIES OF
BAPTIST PREACHERS TO JAIL IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY

my faith, by my works,' a magistrate pushed up, and drew back his club, with a design to knock Webber down; some person behind him, caught the club, and prevented the mischief."

But the magistrate was armed with another kind of weapon, the above mentioned warrant, "to apprehend all who preached, and being backed by two sheriffs, the parson and a posse, he seized Wm. Webber, John Waller, James Greenwood and Robert Ware."

It will be noted from a comparison of Semple's account with the warrant, that the latter calls for the apprehension of two others not mentioned by Semple as having been "seized by the magistrate, two sheriffs, the parson and a posse." These two, Richard Faulkner and Thomas Wafer, were laymen, who being seized along with the four preachers were carried before the Justice of the Peace, James Montague, but were released because they were laymen. Of Richard Faulkner we know nothing more than is contained in this account, but of the other layman, Thomas Wafer, a few facts have been preserved, all of which are highly commendable.

THOMAS WAFORD
Beaten with a Whip

Sometime during that memorable day, when these four preachers and two laymen were arrested by the county authorities for assembling the people and preaching to them, we are told that Thomas Waford, as Dr. Semple spells it, "who had travelled from the upper country with the preachers, though no preacher himself, was severely beaten by one of the persecutors with a whip, the scar of which, he will probably carry to his grave."

The *original* mittimus of these men is on file in the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, and is complete in every detail:

"Middlesex ss:

"James Montague one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace of the said County.

"To the Sheriff or Keeper of the Goal of the County aforesaid.

"I send you herewith the Bodys of John Waller, Robert Ware, James Greenwood and William Webber taken this

day and brought before me, who stand charged with unlawfully assembling themselves at the house of James McKan in this County and taking upon themselves to Teach or Preach the Gospel under the pretence of the exercise of Religion in other manner than according to the Litturgy of the Church of England, they not having Episcopal Ordination to Teach or Preach the same according to the Canons of the said Church of England, and not having, They professing themselves to be Protestant Teachers or Preachers dissenting from the said Church of England, Justified themselves as such According to the directions of an Act of the Parliament of England made in the first year of King William and Queen Mary Intituled an Act for exempting Their Majestys' Protestants Subjects dissenting from the s'd Church of England, from the Penalties of certain Laws, and for labouring to persuade many Persons in Communion of the Church of England to dissent from the same and for raising factions in the minds of his Majesty's Subjects contrary to the Laws of this Colony and against the Peace of our Lord the King, his Crown and Dignity ;

"They the said John Waller, Robert Ware, James Greenwood and William Webber upon their trial and examinations by me had and taken declare they have no Power or authority for which they stand charged, but from above, Therefore I hereby require you to receive them into your Custody and them safely keep in the Goal of the said County until they shall be discharged by due course of Law.

"Given under my hand and Seal this 10th day of August 1771.

James Montague (seal)."

"They were safely lodged in close jail that night about 9 o'clock," and the officers of the county no doubt counted their day's work well worth while. "The prison swarmed with fleas; they borrowed a candle of the jailer; and, having sung the praises of that Redeemer, whose cross they bore, and from whose hands they expected a crown in the end; having returned thanks that it was a prison, and not hell that they were in; praying for themselves, their friends, their enemies and persecutors, they laid down to sleep," and they too, no doubt felt that it was a day well spent. "The next day, being Sunday, many of their friends came to see them, and were admitted into the prison; James Greenwood

preached to them. They were well supplied by their friends with the necessaries and comforts of living, which, added to the sense of divine goodness that they enjoyed, they had no unpleasant season. They gave notice that they would preach every Wednesday and Sunday; many came to hear, insomuch, that their enemies began to be enraged, and would frequently beat a drum, while they were preaching." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 18.)

It is difficult for us in this day of religious freedom to realize how men of clean habits and accustomed to decent surroundings, could pass a "pleasant season" in a vermin infested cell with drunken wretches as their companions. But the love of Christ is wonderful and far reaching. It is not only efficient, but it is sufficient to sweeten the foulest life. And the same power that can change a loathsome, repulsive individual into a decent, law-loving and law-obeying individual, can also sweeten and purify and make pleasant the most loathsome surroundings.

Master Philpot, the eminent Martyr under Mary, wrote to his friends that his loathsome and horrible prison was to him as pleasant as a walk in the garden of the King's Bench, because though in the judgment of the world he was in hell, he nevertheless felt in the same the consolation of heaven. "I was carried to the goal-house," said Mr. Philpot, "where I with my fellows do rouse together in the straw as cheerfully, we thank God, as others do in their beds of down."

So one might go on calling the roll of the righteous, who, like these Baptist preachers in Middlesex jail, have suffered for the truth's sake, and tell how they even reveled with holy joy in their bad lot, but the list is far too long.

In addition to preaching twice a week, Waller and the others, no doubt, spent some time in letter-writing, like the Apostle to the Gentiles when he was in prison. Several of these letters, written by John Waller, have been preserved, and one, written on Monday after their imprisonment, is found in Taylor's *Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers*, Vol. I, page 81:

"Urbanna Prison, Middlesex County,
August 12, 1771.

"Dear Brother in the Lord:

"At a meeting which was held at Brother McCain's, in this county, last Saturday, while William Webber was addressing

the congregation from James 2:18, there came running toward him, in a most furious rage, Captain James Montague, a magistrate of the county, followed by the parson of the parish and several others who seemed greatly exasperated. The magistrate and another took hold of Brother Webber, and dragging him from the stage, delivered him, with Brethren Wafford, Robert Ware, Richard Falkner, James Greenwood, and myself, into custody, and commanded that we should be brought before him for trial. Brother Wafford was severely scourged, and Brother Henry Street received one lash from one of the persecutors, who was prevented from proceeding to further violence by his companions; to be short, I may inform you that we were carried before the above-mentioned magistrate, who with the parson and some others, carried us one by one into a room and examined our pockets and wallets for firearms, etc., charging us with carrying on a mutiny against the authority of the land. Finding none, we were asked if we had license to preach in this county; and learning we had not, it was required of us to give bond and security not to preach any more in the county, which we modestly refused to do, whereupon, after dismissing Brother Wafford, with a charge to make his escape out of the county by twelve o'clock the next day on pain of imprisonment, and dismissing Brother Falkner, the rest of us were delivered to the sheriff and sent to close jail, with a charge not to allow us to walk in the air until court day. Blessed be God, the sheriff and jailor have treated us with as much kindness as could have been expected from strangers. May the Lord reward them for it! Yesterday we had a large number of people to hear us preach; and, among others, many of the great ones of the land, who behaved well while one of us discoursed on the new birth. We find the Lord gracious and kind to us beyond expression in our afflictions. We cannot tell how long we shall be kept in bonds; we therefore beseech, dear brother, that you and the church supplicate night and day for us, our benefactors, and our persecutors.

"I have also to inform you that six of our brethren are confined in Caroline jail, viz., Brethren Lewis Craig, John Burrus, John Young, Edward Herndon, James Goodrick, and Bartholomew Cheming. The most dreadful threatenings are raised in the neighboring counties against the Lord's faithful and humble follows. Excuse haste. Adieu.

John Waller."

The author feels that he is expressing not only his own but the wishes of his readers that more letters from these men, describing their prison experiences, had been preserved, for surely they wrote others during the two weeks that intervened between the date of Waller's letter and court day. Such letters would be interesting to present and also future generations.

But leaving the prisoners for a moment, let us inquire about the attitude of those on the outside of the jail towards these persecuted men. Perhaps many of them were like the old Roman deputy, Gallio, who "cared for none of those things," but there must have been others who were much concerned about their welfare. Accidentally it would seem the writer stumbled across a communication that was sent to the old *Virginia Gazette*, published at the Colonial Capital, Williamsburg, which has a direct deference to the imprisonment of these preachers. It was written from somewhere in "Virginia," and the writer concealed his identity under the non de plume "Timoleon." It is an able presentation of the legal aspects of the case, and shows such familiarity with the circumstances as to lead us to believe that he was thoroughly conversant with all the details of their imprisonment. This newspaper communication was written on Thursday, three days after Waller's historic letter, and is as follows:

"Virginia, August 15, 1771.

"A gentleman, some Time ago, in one of the *Gazettes*, offered it as his opinion that the Act of Toleration passed in the Reign of William and Mary, for the Relief of Protestant Dissenters, does not extend to this Province; and that the penal Laws which were in Force against them in former Reigns, in Great Britain, are still in Force against them here.

"It is not my Design to refute this Opinion. I acknowledge that I have thought, as it is entitled 'an Act for exempting their Majestie's Protestant Subjects, dissenting from the Church of England, from the Penalties of certain Laws,' that it extended to all such Subjects in any Part of their Majestie's Dominions; and exempting them all, in Virginia, as well as in Britain, from suffering by the Laws mentioned in that Act; and indeed I think it is plain that the penal Laws which the Act of Toleration was intended to repeal can reach no farther than the annulling Power of

the repealing Act. If then the penal Laws of James the First, or of Charles the second, extend to Virginia, the other must too, and their penal Nature be destroyed by it. Protestant Dissenters, of Consequence, have as little to fear here, from these or any other penal Laws that have been made, as in England.

“Though it was granted that the Act of Toleration does not extend to this Country, I see no Reason to think that the other Laws do ; and if the Dissenters have not religious Privileges allowed to them by Law, neither are they liable to be punished by any Law for their religious Opinions or Manner of Worship, unless they expose themselves, in the Use or Exercise of them, to penal Laws never intended to affect or regulate either, which the most imprudent of them have not yet done. It may be asked then, by what Authority have some dissenting Teachers been imprisoned in this Province, and very lately in the County of Middlesex? To allow a Magistrate more Power than the Law gives him is making him a Tyrant. Is attempting to make the Ignorant and Wicked wiser and better a Breach of any Law? The Magistrate should approve of such Attempts, as there is great Need of both. But perhaps the Men he committed were badly qualified for the Business. They might be so ; but had he a Right to imprison them for that? It will perhaps be alleged that they exhorted or preached in an unlicensed Place ; but if the Law of Toleration does not extend here, which is the prevailing Opinion, by what Law were they obliged to have any licensed? If there be no such Law, how could they be shut up in a close Prison for disobeying it? Another reason for their Commitment might be their being a Pack of ignorant Enthusiasts. This is a common Accusation ; and People of little Knowledge, and less Humanity, generally think it a very good One. So did Hernando Cortez when he exercised Cruelties on the Mexicans, and Tupinambies of Brazil.

“I heard once a sensible Gentleman in Maryland remark, ‘that if the established Clergy were more diligent and faithful in discharging the Duties of their Function it would be a more effectual and commendable way to disconcert the Measures taken by the Roman Catholick Priesthood to deceive People than to sue and fine them, which served to stir up the Compassion of the Populace to them, and ensure

Success.' However inapplicable this may seem here, it is not without a Moral.

"Many will scarcely believe that Society can subsist on any Foundation but a Sameness of Religion; and think of consequence, every Man an Enemy to the State who objects to an Article of the established Faith. Such People should inform themselves better of the Tendency of religious Opinion that differ from their own, and of the natural Right of Mankind, and be no longer so weak and illiberal. A man may soon be convinced that there are flourishing and happy Governments where the Subjects, though of every Denomination, yet live in Harmony. True Liberty of Conscience is the sacred Property of every Man, which none can take from him without being guilty of Sacrilege and Tyranny.

(Signed) Timoleon."

(From the *Virginia Gazette*, August 22, 1771.)

This is a strong, friendly presentation of their case to the public, and must have had weight with the unprejudiced, where ever it was read. Perhaps it helped to swell the crowds that attended upon their preaching, and gained for them many sympathizers.

Monday, August 26, "being court day, they were carried to the court-house to be tried. A guard attended them, as if they had been criminals. They were not allowed to speak for themselves, but peremptorily required to give bond and security for good behaviour, and, not to preach in the county again for one year: these terms they expressly refused, and were remanded to prison."

The above is from Semple whereas the Court Record says they "were brought into Court and confessed the Fact but justified their conduct as being Protestant Dissenters; whereupon the Court having fully heard them in their own Defence and mature Deliberation being thereupon had," etc. Comparing the two accounts, two discrepancies are noted.

(a) Semple says they were not allowed to speak for themselves, but according to the Court Record they were "fully heard." But if they were given a chance to defend themselves it availed them nothing, for they were sent back to jail against the day when they should each give bond and two securities for their "good behaviour for the space of six months."

(b) Semple says they were required "to give bond for good behaviour," "for one year," but the Court Record names only "six months," and the presumption in both cases is necessarily in favor of the Court Record.

Also Dr. Semple is in error when he names Monday "the 24th" as court day. If August "the 10th" was Saturday, then the following Monday would be the 12th, and two weeks hence the 26th and not the 24th.

The action of the Court is recorded in Order Book for 1769-1772, on page 421, and also the names of the justices who tried them:

"Present his Majestys Justices

James Mills	Maurice Smith	Gentlemen."
Edmund Berkeley	Philip Montague	

"In Middlesex County Court, Monday August 26th, 1771.

"John Waller, Robert Ware, James Greenwood and William Webber, who were committed to the Goal of this County by virtue of a warrant and mittimus from James Montague Gentleman; one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for this said County for Teaching and Preaching the Gospel under the Pretence of the Exercise of Religion, in other manner than according to the Liturgy of the Church of England and without having Episcopal Ordination to teach and preach the same according to the Canons of the said Church of England, were brought into Court, and confessed the Fact, but justified their conduct as being Protestant Dissenters; where upon the Court having fully heard them in their own Defence, and mature deliberation being thereupon had, and it appearing that they had not qualified themselves as Teachers or Preachers, either according to the Laws of this Colony or of Great Britain or the Canons of the Church of England. It is ordered They and each of them be remanded to the Goal of this County there to remain untill they shall severally enter into a Recognizance with two securities each, themselves in the sum of Fifty Pounds each and their securities in the sum of Twenty-five Pounds each, Upon condition that they shall severally and respectively be of good Behaviour for the space of six months next ensuing."

The minutes of the proceedings of the Court were signed by James Mills, Gentleman.

The civil authorities not only refused to license James Mackan's home as a place of public worship, but took another step at the County Court, held on "Monday 26 Aug. 1771" to widen the breach between him and the Established Church. This statement appears in their Order Book for 1769-1772, on page 408:

"James Mackan's List of Tithables is ordered to be added to the List Taken by Philip Montague Gentleman."

Philip Montague was "his Majesty's Justice of the Peace" who issued the warrant for the arrest of these men who were preaching at James Mackan's house on August 10, 1771. They evidently concluded that any man who would allow these "unqualified" preachers to harangue in his home was without the pale of the church and therefore should be deprived of his position in it.

Now that we have noticed the court record of this case, and have seen that the authorities sent Waller, Ware, Greenwood and Webber back to the gaol, let us follow them and see how they fared during their incarceration. Evidently the ire of both State and Church officers had been raised to the highest pitch, for in addition to the jail sentence, orders were given that "they should be fed on bread and water."

"Accordingly, the next day they had nothing else, and not enough bread; so it continued for four days, until the brethren and friends found it out; after that, they were furnished so plentifully, that they bestowed in bounty, upon the poor inhabitants of the town.

"On September the 10th, they were allowed the prison bounds, by which they were much relieved; yet they were frequently under the necessity of resorting to the jail, to avoid the rage of persecutors: the Lord daily opened the hearts of the people; the rich sent many presents, things calculated to nourish them in their sufferings, and to alleviate their sorrows." (*Semple's History* (1810), page 19.)

"A pious woman used to say she would never want, because her God would supply her every need. In a time of persecution she was taken before an unjust judge for attending a conventicle,

as they styled her offence. The judge, 'on seeing her, rejoiced over her, and tauntingly said, 'I have often wished to have you in my power, and now I shall send you to prison, and then how will you be fed?' She replied, 'If it be my heavenly Father's pleasure, I shall be fed from your table';—and that was literally the case; for the judge's wife, being present at her examination, and being greatly struck with the good woman's firmness took care to send her victuals from her table, so that she was comfortably supplied all the while she was in confinement: and in this she found her reward, for the Lord was pleased to work on her soul to her real conversion." (*The Works of the Rev. Charles Buck* (1822), Vol. VI, p. 162.)

It is pleasant to know that while these heroes of the Cross and pioneers of Religious Liberty, here in Virginia, were languishing in a loathsome prison, many friends on the outside were doing all they could to alleviate their sufferings, and that they were, like the good woman referred to above, being fed by the "rich" and "great ones in the land." But it is far more pleasant to have the record that these same friends were not standing idly by and doing nothing to secure their release. On the contrary they circulated a petition among the brethren and their sympathizers, on September 19, 1771, the *original* of which is in the possession of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, and is as follows:

"September 19th, 1771.

"To the worshipful Court of Middlesex County—

"The petition of us inhabitants of this County and others—Humbly Sheweth—

"That whereas your worships made on order last Court for the Baptist Preachers now in our Prison Bounds to enter into Recognizance not to preach or teach in the County for six months under Certain penalties and they being Conscientious And fearing god Could not Consent to the said Conditions and now are bereft of the Opportunity of soliciting the depending General court for license if your Worships should think it Duty for them so to do before Our Legislators shall Redress the Grievances of Dissenters by making a law for them to be guided by.

"We therefore pray your Worships would Reconsider their Case, supercede the aforesaid Order, and release them

from their imprisonment to Return home to their Distressed Families.

“And your Petitioners as in duty Bound shall Pray &c.

Tabthay Shepard	willemsen bryant
John Sadler	John bryant
Richard Street	John Warwick
Abraham Montague	George Warwick
Henry Street	Edward Ware Sen'r
James Mackan	John owen
Thomas Mackan	James Ware
James Mackan Sen'r	Edward Ware
Matthew mackan	Ralf wotts
Charles medris	Jer. Shepard
John Abbott	Philip Vass
Wm. mullen	Henry Shepard
James Lee	John Greenwood
	Latn Montague
	Wm. Owen.”

While the prisoners were willing to suffer that the principle of Religious Liberty might be tested, and also make the persecution of dissenters so odious that the populace would take knowledge of them and act accordingly, yet their friends on the outside desired and sought in this way to secure their liberty, but in vain.

Now let us take another look at the inside of that loathsome jail and see how it fares with the prisoners.

They had “no unpleasant season” until “Wm. Webber fell sick”; then they were in deep trouble. But his sickness, we are told, “excited the sympathy of their friends in a higher degree; they paid him great attention”; and no doubt the other prisoners shared in this increased attention on the part of their friends on the outside. It is but reasonable to suppose that his companions were much concerned about their brother’s physical condition, but John Waller evidently felt it more keenly than any of the others. It is bad enough to be deprived of one’s own liberty, but for one to feel that he is in the remotest sense responsible for his brother’s imprisonment is far worse, and for that reason John Waller was troubled. It was bad enough for Webber to be sick, but to be sick unto death—that was anguish indeed. So John Waller addressed the following letter to Mr. James Mills, at Urbanna,

who was the Gentleman Justice who signed the proceedings of the court and a gentleman of "great power and much esteem" in his community. As far as the author knows, this letter has never before been given to the public but its tender solicitude and unselfishness merit a far better fate than it seems to have received.

"Urb'a Prison, Sept. 20th, 1771.

"Dr sir

"Hoping that in your great clemency, you will when truly informed, commiserate the case, of one of my poor Bro. Prisoners; has caused me, to use this freedom, of writing to you.

"My bro. Webber now in prison, is in a very low state of health, & without divine interposition, must I think, in a few days, launch off the shores of mortality, he is a young man, who when at home, lives with his mother in Goochland, upwards of 100 miles from this I judge: & the reason of his coming down, into this County to preach, was this, The ministers that came with me before, are & has been for some time, in Caroline prison, for the very same thing that I am here; & just before I left home, I was very sick, & pressed on this young man to come with me, to assist me in preaching at my meetings, thro; Carolina, K & Queen & into this County; he had just begin to preach, as the Gent. came who took us up, & he had finish'd his discourse, when he was pull'd off the stage, he is, as well as myself, afraid to sign any Bond, not to preach, for fear of sinning against God; but it is more than probable, if he had now his liberty, that he would never be under obligations, of coming into this County again, for he has not the care of a Church here, as I have, therefore I humbly hope, as you are a Gent. in great power, and much esteem in your County, you will please to procure him, his liberty to return home, to his friends to nurse him—

I am yr. Friend

John Waller jr.

"To

Mr. James Mills
Urbanna."

The petition dated "September 19, 1771" from their brethren and sympathizers on the outside was presented to the court on September 26th, and bears the following endorsement:

"Petition—Geo Warwick and others
Annabaptists."

This seems to mean that it was simply endorsed and filed. It is not even marked "Rejected," as some of them were. No attention was paid to this sympathetic petition of the friends on the outside or to John Waller's unselfish request for friendly intercession in behalf, not of himself, but of his sick fellow-prisoner, for whose predicament he holds himself largely responsible. Neither that fellow-feeling which sometimes makes us wondrous kind, nor that fine injunction—noblesse oblige—which aristocracy lays upon itself, availed anything.

We cannot doubt that the authorities were anxious to get rid of them, but just how to do it and "save their face" as the Chinese say, was the problem.

The Poet William Cowper was writing from experience when he said:

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

Who would have thought that stopping these men from preaching from house to house, and shutting them up in a loathsome prison, would be the means of their reaching more people with the Gospel and accomplishing more good than they could possibly have done if they had been at liberty? But it was so ordered of God. "They collected larger congregations, and accomplished more in spreading their views and in winning souls to Christ, than they probably could have done had they been let alone. Their enemies were helping them more than they were hindering them, in promulgating the truth and advancing the kingdom of Christ. For a few weeks before their discharge, they were allowed the privilege of the prison bounds. But, if they attempted to hold any meetings they were assailed by the mob, and forced to fly back to the jail, as a place of security. Their safest preaching place was at the jail windows." (Dr. J. L. Burrows, in *Religious Herald*, Aug. 22, 1872.)

According to Dr. Semple's *History*, page 19:

"The persecutors found that the imprisonment of the preachers, tended rather to the furtherance of the gospel. They preached regularly in prison; crowds attended; the preaching seemed to have double weight when coming from the jail; many viewed it with superstitious reverence, so that their enemies became desirous to get rid of them. Accordingly, on the 26th day of September, after having been 30 days in close confinement, and 16 days in the bounds, they were liberated, upon giving a bond for good behaviour."

Perhaps there was another reason besides "superstitious reverence" that gave added power to the sermons preached. These men may have preached better when confined behind prison bars. For they had learned the lesson that all should remember when borne down by trials; that they are sent to us only for instruction, just as we darken the cages of our birds when we wish them to sing. In the compensations of life there is one inspiring chapter which records how the immortal songs have been sorrow-born. It tells in the most affecting and convincing way how affliction refines the spirit and how "the agonizing throes of thought bring forth glory." In many, very many, instances,

- - - "The anguish of the singer
Marks the sweetness of the song."

And what is true of poetry is as true, if not more so, of preaching. There may have been a tenderness in the tone of their messages, when tempered by the trials of imprisonment, which was totally lacking under normal conditions. God knows *what* keys in the human soul to touch in order to draw out its sweetest harmonies.

Morgan Edwards, in his manuscript *Notes*, page 21, states that Waller and his companions in Urbanna gaol preached "thro' the grates as in Spotsylvania" and then gives this additional information:

"The mob with drum and other noises endeavored to silence them, but were not able; at last they let them go partly to get rid of them and partly thro' the relenting of their persecutors."

Dr. Burrows article in the *Religious Herald* also gives this mode of trying to silence them:

“Their persecutors ordered a drum to be beat under the windows, in order to drown their voices; but no jangle of drums could equal the force and volume of their utterances, as they eloquently proclaimed the gospel of the Son of God. Sanctified lungs overpowered the rattle of dried sheep skin. Above all the hubbub swelled the clear tones of these fearless orators of freedom and truth. The people heard them, and the faithful were strengthened, and scoffers were confounded, convinced and converted.”

Morgan Edwards's *Volumes*, page 35, contain this comment on John Waller's experience in Middlesex jail:

“Sometime after he (and three others) was put in Urbana goal. Here also he preached through the bars to the people without. The mob (as in Fredericksburg) used all possible means to silence him, but in vain; at last they let him go about his business. It were endless to mention all the ill usage this man of God met with both in and out of prison. Truly he bears in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”

Their contemporaries bore eloquent testimony to the high moral character of these men when they declared in their petition for their release that they were conscientious men who feared God and who would remain in jail rather than comply with the conditions the authorities had laid down. They were not men-pleasers like John Dryden, who was spoken of by his friends as “glorious old John,” and who said, “I confess my chief endeavors are to delight the age in which I live.” Not so with these preachers in Middlesex jail. No such thought controlled their conduct. They were not men-pleasers, nor eye-servers. There was no playing to the galleries. They were only concerned about pleasing God. They did not spend their time in the pursuit of the gewgaws of pleasure, which when gained, are like apples of Sodom which turn to ashes in one's grasp, but they performed well their part in weaving the “tangled web of life.” The web of their lives was drawn into the loom for them, but they had to weave it themselves. They threw their own shuttle and worked their own treadle. The warp was given them, to be sure, in the time and circumstances under which

they lived, but they found their own materials, and colored and figured them to suit themselves. And we defy the art critics of the world to point to a more beautiful piece of tapestry work, both as to color scheme and figures, than the one these men produced out of the rough materials at their command.

There is a sublimity in conscious rectitude, a pleasure in the approval of one's own mind, in comparison with which the treasures of earth are not worthy to be mentioned. Conscience set these men on their feet, but it was their wills that held them upright.

In 1873 another letter was written from the county seat of Middlesex, which treats of these cases of fines and imprisonment and contains valuable information not to be found elsewhere. This letter written by Mr. P. T. Woodward, the intelligent clerk of the court of that county, and a loyal Baptist, was addressed to Dr. J. L. M. Curry, and is being preserved by the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, University of Richmond, Virginia. Mr. Woodward had carefully reviewed these cases of imprisonment in his own county, and performed for the Baptist denomination a signal service when he first made copies of these rare papers then petitioned the court for the original documents, which he turned over to the Society. It can be readily seen that his painstaking efforts have made possible this full account of the part Middlesex County played in that day of persecution and imprisonment of Baptist preachers. Mr. Woodward's letter follows:

"Saluda, Middlesex County
April 28th, 1873

"Bro. Curry

"Dr. Sir

"I send enclosed copies of several papers, which may be useful to you. I shall petition our court at the next term for the originals— And if granted, will have them in Richmond at the meeting in June— Also I will have a brick from the same old jail— I have sent you a mem. of only the presentments made at the May terms— There were quite as many made at each one of the other quarterly terms— But I thought it best to select May— Most of those presented were fined each time 5 shillings and the cost— Very few were excused—

"I suppose that John Waller and others had to remain in jail for the full period of six months— Record does not show that they were ever discharged— Nor did the court take any notice of Waller's letter, or of the petition for the release— On the contrary I find in making the county levy at Nov— term 1771— They allowed the jailer 2667 lbs. of tobacco and directed as follows—

" 'To John Daniel jailer, N. B. 414 lbs. Tobacco of this amount to be levied of the Estate of John Waller, if any.'

"And it appears, that they was only 9 lbs. levied upon each tithable person— Therefore I suppose Waller had to pay the expense—

Most respectfully

Yours &c in haste

P. T. Woodward."

The records for Middlesex County show a number of presentments, trials and convictions for "not attending church" for a period of three years, 1771, 1772 and 1773. For May, 1772, the grand jury presented the following for "not attending church":

"Lucretia Pritchett
Wm Deagle
Edward Ware
Edward Webmore
Thomas Bennett
John Bennett
James Bennett."

Also the grand jury indicted thirteen more on May 24, 1773, for the same crime of "not attending church":

"David Powal & wife
Lucretia Pritchett
Benj'n Rhodes
Judith Drummel
Wm Deagle & wife
James Deagle
Christopher Miller
Thomas Hoddon
William Lee
John Hoar
James Bennett."

The reader will notice that the name of Lucretia Pritchett appears in each list. She seems to have been presented at every court and fined each time.

There were quite as many presentments at each one of the other quarterly terms of court, but the three given will suffice to show the trend of the times, and the dogged determination of the zealous churchmen of that day to put a stop to such neglect of the parish church.

WILLIAM WEBBER AND
DOVER BAPTIST CHURCH

This imprisonment in Middlesex jail was the second and last that William Webber suffered for preaching the gospel. Later through his instrumentality and that of his comrade, Joseph Anthony, the Powhatan church, known in early history as Dupuy's, was constituted.

"A short time previous to his death he was visited by Elder Benjamin Watkins, who found him in a rapturous state of mind. 'Brother Watkins,' said he, 'I never had such glorious manifestations of the love of God as I have enjoyed since my sickness. Oh, the love of God.' Thus with heaven in his soul, he left the earth February 29th, in the year 1808." (Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, Series I, p. 156.)

William Webber was buried at his old homestead, about three miles north of the Dover Baptist Church, which is located at Manakin, Goochland County. His quaint pre-Revolutionary dwelling stood the ravages of time until a few years before the



DOVER BAPTIST CHURCH

sesquicentennial of the Dover church (September 2, 1923), when it was destroyed by fire. He lies in an unmarked grave, like so many of those old heroes of the cross. But at this 150th anniversary of the Dover Baptist Church of which Webber was the

pastor from its organization in 1773 to his death in 1808 an appropriate program was rendered in connection with the unveiling of a monument presented to the church by the churches of the Dover Association of which he was Moderator for 23 years.

The monument consists of a block of Chesterfield granite, six feet high, and bearing a bronze tablet on which is the following inscription:

“WILLIAM WEBBER

1747—1808

First pastor of Dover Church 1773-1808

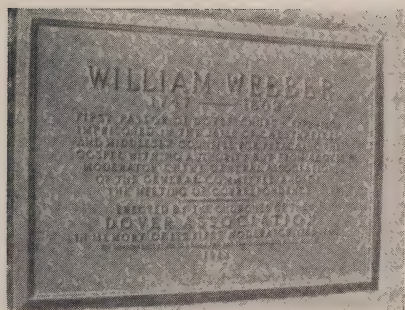
Imprisoned in the jails of Chesterfield and Middlesex counties for preaching the Gospel with ‘no authority but from above.’ Moderator of the General Association of the General Committee and of the Meeting of Correspondence.

Erected by the churches of the

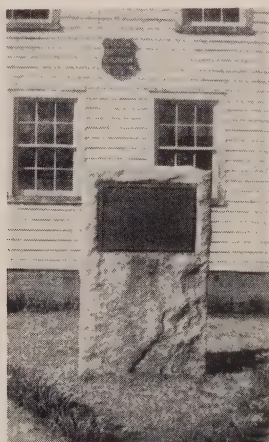
DOVER ASSOCIATION

In memory of its First Moderator, 1783-1806

1923.”



TABLET ON MONUMENT AT
DOVER BAPTIST CHURCH



MONUMENT AT
DOVER BAPTIST CHURCH

GLEBE-LANDING CHURCH

Rev. J. D. McGill's *Sketches of History of the Baptist Churches Within the Limits of the Rappahannock Association* (1850), pages 12-14, gives a historical sketch of the Glebe-Landing church in Middlesex County, in which is an account of this instance of persecution in that county:

"In the spring of 1771, James McKan (who was probably one of those thus waiting to be baptized) presented to the County Court a petition, praying to have his house licensed as a place of worship for Protestant dissenters; but his petition was rejected. William Webber, then recently released from several months imprisonment in Chesterfield, and John Waller, who had suffered persecution in Spotsylvania and other Counties, arrived at the house of McKan on the 10th day of August, 1771. The adherents of the established Church appear to have been awaiting their arrival. A warrant, issued by Philip Montague, which had evidently been prepared with the aid of professional skill, was placed in the hands of an officer. The original warrant is now on file in the Clerk's office of Middlesex County.* It recites, that John Waller, Robert Ware, James Greenwood, William Webber, Richard Faulkner and Thomas Wafer are present at the house of James McKan, at a conventicle or unlawful assembly of more than ten, besides the family, 'met together under the pretence of the exercise of religion, in other manner than according to the liturgy and practice of the Church of England.' That they had taken upon themselves to teach or preach, 'not having Episcopal ordination, according to the canons of the Church of England.' and professing to be dissenters; that 'they have not qualified themselves to teach or preach as such,' according to the provisions of the act of I William and Mary; that the house of McKan was not a place licensed for religious worship under that act, and that these men 'do labor and persuade many persons in communion of the Church of England to dissent from the same.' And the officer is commanded to apprehend them, and bring them before some magistrate to answer for the premises. While Webber was preaching, on the very day of their arrival, this warrant was executed by two sheriffs, 'accom-

* This warrant is now (1934) in the Virginia Baptist Historical Society rooms, University of Richmond, Virginia.

panied by the parson of the parish and a posse,' and on the same day they were all taken before James Montague, another magistrate of the County. Faulkner and Wafer were discharged: but, on their examination, the other four, having declared 'that they had no power or authority for that which they had done (preaching the gospel), but from above,' were committed to gaol until they should be thence discharged by due course of law. On the 26th of August they were brought before the County Court, and by that tribunal were remanded to gaol, there to remain until they should have entered into bonds for their good behavior. Rightly supposing that by giving such bonds under the judgment of the Court, founded upon the charges for which they had been tried, they would not only have admitted that there was actual impropriety in their conduct, but would have been under an implied obligation, at least, to abstain from the discharge of a duty for which they had received 'power and authority from above'; these men of God refused to comply with the demand, and chose rather to submit to bonds and imprisonments than thus be silenced. How long they were confined cannot be positively ascertained. Mr. Semple says, thirty days in close confinement, and sixteen days in prison bounds; but he was evidently misinformed with reference to several parts of this transaction, and may have been in this. It does not appear that they ever entered into bonds which had been required, and the records of the court show no order for their discharge. It is more than probable that their opponents became convinced of the impolicy of the course which they had adopted. Public sympathy was excited for them; the coarse prison fare to which they were at first confined, was substituted by an abundant supply of provisions and comforts received from the neighborhood. They daily preached from their prison windows to large numbers, some of whom, attracted by curiosity, were reached by the gospel, and converted from opponents to friends. The court may have been influenced by these considerations to take no notice of their departure from the prison bounds; and the parson and his posse, who had been so active in their apprehension, were, in all likelihood, convinced that their imprisonment tended rather to the furtherance of the gospel, and gladly submitted to their escape. It is certain that no efforts were afterwards made in this County to prevent Baptist ministers from preaching, or punish them for doing

so, under color of the law; although they were subsequently persecuted to some extent. Groundless reports were circulated to their prejudice; their worship was treated with rudeness and indecency; preachers were insulted in time of service; and the simple and sublime rite of baptism interrupted by scoffers, who rode into the water, and made sport during its administration."

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Rev. L. A. Alderson, of Atkinson, Kansas, in a letter to the *Religious Herald*, April 6, 1871, referring to this case of imprisonment in Middlesex, gives this personal observation:

"When the writer visited this county, in 1843, the county records concerning these ministers were in a good state of preservation. There was not a *parson* in the county. Every magistrate in the county and every lawyer at the bar was a member of the Baptist church. The church buildings of the Establishment were either mouldering in ruins, or had been refitted for use of the Baptists. The graveyards, with their mossy marble tombs surrounding the ruins, were overgrown with forest trees."

Urbanna, the county-seat of Middlesex, where these preachers were tried and imprisoned, was established in 1705, and according to Henry Howe's *History of Virginia*, page 379, was the "residence of the celebrated botanist and physician, John Mitchell, who emigrated to this country from England" and "distinguished himself by his philosophical and medical essays, and historical writings." Philosophical theories and writings have often been permitted when religious teachings and propaganda have been tabooed.

A Brick from Middlesex County Jail

Among the many valuable relics being preserved by the Virginia Baptist Historical Society there is an old *brick* from the walls of the Middlesex County jail at Urbanna where our Baptist preachers were imprisoned. This brick is rough and mortar-stained, but it has a sentimental value far beyond any computation

of figures, and ought to be beautiful not only in the eyes of Virginia Baptists, but of all who prize religious freedom.

A piece of paper pasted on this old brick is now yellow with age and hard to decipher, but by close scrutiny we read the following:

“Brick from old jail at Urbanna, Middlesex Co., Virginia, in which Waller, Greenwood & others were imprisoned for preaching the gospel.

“Presented by Ex-Lieutenant Governor,

Robert L. Montague.”

Madam Guyon, whose “aggressive holiness” was so obnoxious to the Established Church of France, was shut up in prison after prison, and after four years of dungeon life in the Bastille, expecting every hour to be executed for heresy, was finally banished to a distant province to end her days. She wrote and sang many songs of praise during her imprisonment and died in 1771, the very year so many of our Virginia Baptist preachers were being imprisoned for preaching the gospel. The light in which she viewed the very walls of her dungeon has been preserved. She wrote:

“It sometimes seems to me as if I were a little bird whom the Lord had placed in a cage; and that I had nothing now to do but sing. The joy of my heart gave a brightness to the objects around me. The stones of my prison looked, in my eyes like rubies. I esteemed them more than all the gaudy brilliances of a vain world.”

JOHN AFFERMAN

In Dr. George B. Taylor's *Walter Ennis*, there is an instance of persecution in Middlesex County, which this writer has been unable to verify, and yet is inclined to believe that the author must have had a specific case in mind when he introduced John Afferman into his story. There is no good reason for believing that he was simply a fictitious character, but strong proof, to be introduced further on, that he was a real character. Let us look first at the circumstances as related by Dr. Taylor:

JOHN AFFERMAN

So Cruelly Beaten as to Incapacitate Him for Work

"A weary traveler appeared at Walter Ennis's home and addressed him as follows: 'I do not appeal for aid but a night's lodging and food.' He was 'muddy and travel-worn, but bore evidence in his mien of being a man of character.'

"He was hospitably received and entertained. When he had refreshed himself and was more tidy he 'presented even a more suspicious appearance than at first. His face was bruised and his arm so stiff that it was with difficulty he could use it.'

" 'I see,' said he, 'that you have noticed my' bruises, and I fear you will scarcely believe the account I shall give of them. I would not attempt to force it upon your credence without some evidence of my reliability.'

"Saying this, he handed Walter several letters from Rapahannock County, directed to John Afferman, which he said was his name. He also produced a paper indenturing him as an apprentice in the china factory of Governor Spottswood's lands. He then showed a paper stating that, on the abandonment of the china business, he had engaged in oystering in the county of Middlesex. Here, he said, he had been a Baptist: and, as he expressed it, in the absence of better men, he had occasionally read and explained the Bible to his brethren. He then proceeded to give a full account of his having been interrupted in one of his meetings, and so brutally beaten as to incapacitate him for his work. He said he had also been thrown into jail, but not being a preacher, had been soon set at liberty, whereupon he had immediately started on his journey to his father's home." (Dr. Geo. B. Taylor's *Walter Ennis*, pp. 207, 208.)

In his efforts to identify John Afferman an appeal was made to Dr. George Braxton Taylor, son of the author of *Walter Ennis*, and his reply only strengthens the previous statement that it is not necessary to assume that a fictitious name had been given him, and also furnishes an interesting side-light on another real character in *Walter Ennis*. Dr. Taylor's reply follows:

“GEORGE BRAXTON TAYLOR
THE ‘ENON OAKS’
HOLLINS, VIRGINIA

Mar. 7, '25.

“Dear Brother Little :

“As to your query about the historicity of John Afferman in *Walter Ennis*, I can find nothing about him in any of the books I have. I do remember very well when my Father was writing the book that he was careful to consult original authorities for all his historical statements. I also remember that the incident given on page 418, where a man named Skyron appears was a real story and that the plan had been to substitute some fictitious name as the picture of Skyron was rather ludicrous and when the book came out my Mother was shocked to find that Skyron's name had not been changed. (She had furnished this incident which was historical.) In the case of Afferman there would have been no reason to substitute any thing for his real name.

“I am wondering whether the clerks of Middlesex and Rappahannock counties would give light as to such a family or such a man as the one you seek to know.

Very Cordially,

Geo. Braxton Taylor.

Rev. L. Peyton Little.
Williamsburg, Va.”

The clerks of Middlesex and Rappahannock Counties could give no help in identifying this character in Dr. Taylor's historical novel.

THOMAS WAFORD
*So Severely Whipped That He Carried the
Scars to His Grave*

Thomas Waford was also taken up with a company of preachers in Essex County, in 1774, as we shall see later on, and being carried before a magistrate was examined even to having his saddle-bags searched, and then discharged, not having disturbed the peace by preaching. After referring to this later experience Dr. Semple's *History* (1810), page 163, has this to say about

another experience of this zealous disciple, which doubtless refers to the case under discussion in Middlesex County in 1771 :

“At another meeting, when persecution ran high, he went to the spring to drink, and there, meeting with one of the sons of Belial, was severely whipped ; the scars of which, he will doubtless carry to his grave.”

In Dr. Semple's historical sketch of Williams church, the membership of which resided in Goochland and Louisa counties, is a highly commendable account of Thomas Waford. (Semple's 1810 edition, pp. 162, 163.)

“In this church lives Thomas Waford an old and faithful disciple of Christ, who was among the first to profess religion at the rise of the Baptists. He is not a preacher, but has done more good than a score of preachers of a certain description. When Waller and others used to travel off into strange places, Mr. Waford used to go on sometimes beforehand and publish their meetings and procure places for them to preach at ; then he would return and accompany them. He would enforce by private arguments and admonition what the preachers advanced from the pulpit. He also shared in their persecutions. Once he was taken up with them in Essex county and carried before a magistrate and examined and his saddle-bags searched, and then discharged not having disturbed the peace by preaching &c. * * * Mr. Waford is now (1809), more than four score years of age, and has professed religion more than forty years, during which time he has maintained a spotless reputation, not only for order and piety, but for steady and unabating zeal. Old as he is he misses very few associations.”

During the semi-centennial of the Baptist General Association of Virginia in Richmond in 1873, Rev. James Fife was the only one present who had taken part in the organization of the body in 1823. In an address on that memorable occasion he said :

“In the church at Williams where I was pastor, was an old man over eighty years, who could show the scar on his back that was inflicted by the persecutors of the Baptists. His name was Wafford. Thus in my young days there were still a remnant to be found who were the first fruits of the blessed harvest which followed.”

Dr. George W. Beale's article in the *Religious Herald* of June 8, 1899, entitled "Baptist Beginnings in Virginia," refers to this same brother as follows:

"Thomas Waford, a devout layman, who lived near Culpeper Courthouse, and whose delight it was to travel ahead of certain of the old preachers and arrange meetings for them, was assailed at a spring near one of the meeting-places and severely beaten. He bore the scars of this brutal violence to his grave, though he lived to he four-score years."

At the trial of these four preachers—John Waller, Robert Ware, James Greenwood, and William Webber—before his Majesty's Justice of the Peace, James Montague, their saddlebags were searched "to find treasonable papers," but finding none, their persecutors proceeded with the trial. They were taken "one by one, into private rooms," and the proposition was made to them that they "give bond and security not to preach in the county again." This "each of them expressly refused" to do, and they were "ordered to prison." They were conducted by two sheriffs on their way to jail, and these officers of the law no doubt carried the mittimus which has been given on a previous page to the keeper of that institution.

"In every age it has been the faith that risked that has moved mountains, cast out devils, and healed the nations. That is where faith finds its test and its triumphs; and alas! that is where faith so often breaks down. We can trust God for receiving; we can trust even for sanctifying grace; but when it comes to risk! When obedience may mean loss of position, loss of money, loss of home, how many there are who shrink back! When faith involves risk of failure, the sorrow of reproach, and the sting of ridicule, what then?

"After Bunyan had been a preacher for five or six years, he was seized for pursuing this unlawful calling, and at the end of seven weeks' preliminary imprisonment, he was had up to Bedford, where it was charged, 'That he, John Bunyan, labourer (for the Lord, they might have said), hath devilishly and maliciously abstained from coming to church to hear Divine service, and is a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and

conventicles,' etc. So they determined that against such a devilish and malicious man they would angelically and benevolently do what they might. Conventicles, indeed, instead of churches! Shame on you, John Bunyan, you can listen to the bell-ringing, cannot you, if there is nothing else you can hear at church to your liking. So Judge Keeling says, 'Hear our judgment. You must be back to prison; lie there three months. Then if you don't come to church you shall be banished the country, and if you are not gone by the day appointed, or come back, plainly, you must stretch by the neck for it. To this Bunyan answered, 'If I am out of prison today I shall preach again tomorrow.' And as to hanging, he had his thoughts about that, sometimes comfortable, sometimes not. What if he should quake and faint? That was not pleasant to think of. But if he might convert only one soul by his last words, that would make some amends for hanging. But what of his own faith? 'I'll leap off, blindfold,' said he, 'come heaven, come hell, sink or swim. Lord Jesus, if Thou will catch me, do; if not, I venture for Thy name.' Bold words, yet humble; but he was not to climb up to heaven by way of the hangman's ladder. Sometimes in his solitude he had comfort, great comfort. Taken in the very act of saving sinners, and for no other crime, his Savior was with him, and he rhymes his experience thus:

"The prison very sweet to me
Hath been since I came here,
And so would also hanging be
If God will there appear."

(Quoted by Dr. James Hasting, in *The Christian Doctrine of Faith*, from T. T. Lynch's *The Mornington Lecture*, p. 108.)

Our Virginia Baptist preachers were very much like John Bunyan for they, too, were "Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." No greater liberty hath any man than this, that he is willing to lay down his life for the religious freedom of his fellows. "You take a life from me that I cannot keep," said one of the martyrs to his persecutors, "and bestow a life upon me that I cannot lose; which is as if you should rob me of counters, and furnish me with gold." (John Whitecross's *Anecdotes* (1835), Vol. II, p. 156.)

AMHERST COUNTY

County Seat—Amherst

AMHERST (EBENEZER)

Constituted May 10, 1771

Thomas Hargate Imprisoned, at Amherst Court House

Three days after the constitution of the Buckingham church and on the day those preachers stopped at Mr. Clark's, a church was constituted in the county of Amherst. Mr. Edwards's account is found on page 13 of his *Notes*, and is as follows:

"So called from the county. The meeting house is near Buffalo river (that of James River) Tobacco-row mountain. Distant from Williamsburg 182 miles. The house is 36 x 18 built in 1771, on land given by James Menniest; the other branch at tieriver; another at rockfish river; another at Pedler-river. * * *

"No Minister. Exhorters. James Mennies senr. John Duncan, Wm. Whiteside, James Cull, (a grammar schollar), Thomas Hargate. Remarkable events (1) One Zachariah Tolliver, Eq. disturbed them by taking into custody the preacher Hargate in Sep. 1771. They began by means of said Hargate who in Oct. 1767 preached here (Harris & D. Lane passed that way before) and converted James Menist Senr. and wife, James Menist Jur and wife," etc. * * * All baptized by Rev. Sam. Harriss. These (with Devroux Gilliam and wife baptized by ditto) were formed into a church in May 10, 1771, and the same year joined the association."

According to Morgan Edwards's *Volumes*, page 28, this Amherst church had the following:

"Remarkables. (1) They rose into being against strong opposition from mobs & magistrates; among the last one Zachariah Tolliver, Esq. distinguished himself in officious violence against them, for-bidding Hargate to preach, taking him prisoner, and uttering great swelling words of vanity to intimidate the kings good subjects."

The Court records of Amherst county give the name of Zachariah Taliaferro as a Justice of the Peace in the year 1768, and

no doubt Morgan Edwards wrote the name as it was pronounced—"Tolliver." Mr. Edwards's statement that Thomas Hargate, who was an exhorter of the Amherst church (now Ebenezer), was taken into custody in September, 1771, by the above named officer, who may have been a sheriff in 1771, is the only reference the author has been able to find in this connection. A personal search among the records of Amherst county revealed that all the Order Books covering this interesting period, 1769-1784, have been destroyed, and tradition says that the leaves were used by Union soldiers, during the War Between the States, for purposes of letter writing. The jail of Amherst county in 1771 was almost a new building as the old one was burned in December of 1768 with very tragic results, as the following extract from the *Virginia Gazette* of December 15, 1768, shows:

"On the 4th of this instant, about ten o'clock at night, the gaol of Amherst county by some accident caught fire, and one Richard Fletcher Gregory confined in it for debt, perished in the flames. There was something very deplorable in this man's fate, for although by his cries, he awakened the jailor, who immediately snatched up the keys, as he thought of the prison, and ran directly to open the door, yet upon trial he found they were the wrong ones, and by his repeated efforts to unlock the door spoiled the lock, so that when he came with the right key it had no effect. Then he roused up a Negro fellow, who with an axe laboured hard to cut the door through, and when he had completed it found that what he had done was in vain, as there were iron bars in the inside. The poor man, who was all this time at the window, and seeing nothing more could be done for his relief, as the fire bursted out at the prison door, and hindered the Negro from proceeding, resigned himself to his fate. He took off his clothes and threw them out at the window, telling the jailor to give them to his poor wife and children, as the only legacy he had to leave them. He then returned to a corner of the prison and lay down, waiting his fate. Next morning his remains were found, which were nothing but his skull and thigh bones."

The Amherst County Order Book for 1766-1769, page 444, gives the action of the next court concerning a new jail. As it was in this new gaol that Thomas Hargate was most probably

kept when "taken into custody" by Zachariah Taliaferro, it may not be inappropriate to give the court's action, as it will also serve to show the kind of jail that was in use at that time. It is as follows:

"At a Court held for Amherst County at the Courthouse the second day of January 1769, and in the Ninth year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the third now King of Great Britain &c.

* * * *

"Before his Majestices (to wit),

William Cabell Junr	John Rose	Hugh Rose
Cornelius Thomas	Francis Meriwether	Thomas Wiatt

* * * *

"Ordered that the Sheriff do Advertise the letting of the building of a Prison for the use of this County, to the lowest bidder, and of the following dimensions (to wit), the length of the prison thirty four feet, the Width sixteen feet, & eight feet in hight, with a flush wall eight Inches thick Lined with Plank an Inch & quarter thick within and without, the Sills, girders, & trimmers, one foot square, the Sleepers, nine inches deep, & the joist. Sleepers & Posts, to touch each other, all of good Oak Timber, with a good brick Chimney with two fire places, & the windows, doors & Chimney to be effectually secured with good Iron Gratings."

While there is no way to verify the statement of Mr. Edwards by an appeal to Court records, and thereby prove that Thomas Hargate was imprisoned in this strong county prison, yet the words "taking into custody the preacher" must mean *that* and that he was held for a time in jail or it would not have "disturbed them." If he had simply been arrested and forced to give security for his good behaviour this would hardly have "disturbed them" for that was the portion of many of his brethren at that time. Remember, too, that Mr. Edwards did not rely upon hear-say evidence, but gathered the facts personally, and remember also they were gathered that same fall or the following year, for Benedict's *History* (1813), page 86, says: "In the year 1772 in which Morgan Edwards' manuscript history of Virginia Baptists closes."

As the name of Thomas Hargate does not appear among the list of preachers it is probable that he was never ordained, but was content to serve his Lord in the capacity of an "exhorter." No further facts about his life are known, nor the time, place or circumstances of his death.

Semple's *History* (1810), page 172, gives this brief account of the Ebenezer church, which is evidently the same referred to by Morgan Edwards in the above extract:

"Ebenezer Church, was under the pastoral care of Elder Orsun Flowers until 1805, when he was drawn into the vortex of the baptist preachers, Kentucky. Since his removal, they have been attended by Elder Duncan. They had a revival in 1804."

Beale's *Semple* (1894), page 227, tells where the church was located:

"This body was located four or five miles to the south-east of Amherst Courthouse. They still sustain an efficient connection with the Albemarle Association."

When the Piedmont Baptist Association was organized in 1903, the Ebenezer church was one of the constituent members with which it has since "sustained an efficient connection."

MANOR

Constituted September 9, 1771

Students of early Virginia Baptist history have frequent and grateful recourse to the *Notes* of Morgan Edwards since they were written after a personal visit to Virginia and the information he gives is therefore not only more explicit but more reliable than that furnished by many others.

The next church to be organized, according to Mr. Edwards' *Notes*, page 39, was the Manor Baptist Church. It was:

"So called from Lord Fairfax's manor in Fawquire county, 160 miles nnw from Williamsburg. The house is 32 by 24 built in 1771 on land given by Lord Fairfax. * * * No minister. Exhorter, John Pinckard. They originated from Broadrun, partly from Goosecreek whereof they were members. Constituted Sep. 9, 1771."

JOHN TAYLOR

John Taylor, a native of Fauquier County, and also a ministerial son of South River, later called Happy Creek, assisted Joseph Redding in establishing Lunie's Creek in Hardy County, West Virginia. When William Marshall gave up Happy Creek and moved to Kentucky John Taylor became pastor. He, too, eventually moved to Kentucky, and was instrumental in the first religious revival in the State in 1785. He founded a number of churches, "traveled and preached very extensively and probably performed more labor and was more successful than any other preacher in Kentucky." His travels extended to Virginia, where he preached in many places with great acceptance. He wrote *The History of Ten Churches*, and several minor treatises." (Beale's *Semple*, footnote, p. 415.)

In the Second Edition of his *History* (1827), page 37, he relates some of his preaching experiences of which the following is a sample:

JOHN TAYLOR

*Suffered the Rage of Mobs, and Public Contradiction
Twenty Rugged Fellows Came with Instruments
of Death to Break Up a Meeting*

"There being no established priest in Hampshire county, we met with no legal persecution while preaching there; but this did not prevent the rage of mobs, such as open contradiction while preaching, for Satan is not fond of loosing his prey; we were only once driven from a place of preaching, having a meeting appointed on Christmas day, in a rich and wealthy settlement, one of Satan's strongest holds in the country, the invitation for preaching was given by a man, living in a large house, and on his father-in-law's land. A large assembly met, but the old gentleman, the owner of the land, roused perhaps twenty rugged young fellows, a number of whom came armed with instruments of death, to drive all before them; a mighty uproar soon took place in the house, with some blows from the old man on his son-in-law; Redding and myself standing by the side of the house, concluding to retire, for a deep snow had lately fallen that we could not go into the woods and but few of the people present was of a religious cast. After our departure they turned the meeting

into a great Christmas frolic, so that Satan the strong man, kept his palace and goods in peace in this place as yet, but became much frustrated afterwards."

Dr. Beale's footnote states that "He (John Taylor) died near Frankfort in the winter of 1836," but he gives no information concerning the place of his burial.

GOOCHLAND

Constituted December 23, 1771

Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), page 56, gives a brief statement of the Goochland church, which is found in his account of Elder Reuben Ford:

"In the County of Goochland, especially, were his efforts successful. A large number were introduced into the liberty of the children of God; and in the year 1771, the Goochland Church was constituted, with about seventy-five members. This was among the earliest Baptist churches of the State of Virginia."

Referring again to Morgan Edwards's *Notes*, on page 29, is found the following account of the Goochland church:

"GOOCHLAND, from the county. 80 miles w of Williamsburg. Two branches; one near, where is a house 24 by 20 built in 1770 on land given by John Webber; the other near Manakin, where is a house 40 by 24. Families about 500 whereof 134 memb. Divided about rites. No minister ordained. but Reuben Ford, Wm Webber, Augustin Eastin, Joseph Anthony, exh. Wm Farrar, Philip Webber; the first soon to be ordained. Originated from Lowerspotsylvania. Constituted De 23, 1771."

Morgan Edwards's *Volumes*, page 42, states that "This church hath suffered less than any in Virginia; the reason is that some of the gentry have joined it and others favour it."

DUPUY'S (POWHATAN)

Constituted 1771

Dupuy's church, so called after their pastor Elder John Dupuy, was located in Powhatan County, and afterwards called by name of the county. The second time the Northern and Southern

Districts met together was at Dupuy's meeting-house, Powhatan (then Cumberland) County, the second Saturday in August, 1775. It was at this meeting that Elijah Craig, Lewis Craig, Jeremiah Walker and John Williams were appointed to wait on the General Assembly with a petition for leave to preach to the army. The chief object in uniting the two districts seems to have been that they might strive together more effectually for the abolition of the church establishment in Virginia. The last meeting of the General Association was at Dupuy's meeting-house, Powhatan County, second Saturday in October, 1783. The second meeting of the General Committee was at Dupuy's meeting-house, on Saturday, August 13, 1785. The General Committee met again at Dupuy's meeting-house in 1796. Dupuy's was considered an arm of Goochland, and was constituted in 1771. It was for a long time a flourishing church. Looking backward we note that:

POWHATAN CHURCH

*Their Pastor David Tinsley Was Immured in Chesterfield
Jail for Four Months and Sixteen Days*

"The Gospel was first carried here by Elder Webber and Anthony, at that time very young preachers. They were followed by Waller, the Craigs, and finally David Tinsley, who agreed to settle among them. The Word took a rapid spread; many were added, of whom several became preachers. Tinsley was very laborious among them until the year 1774, when he was clutched by the iron hand of persecution, and immured in Chesterfield prison. The forlorn state of the church, through his absence, stirred up the spirit of John Dupuy, who commenced first as exhorter and then preacher; and a few years afterwards, when left by Tinsley, the church chose him their pastor. Under his ministrations the church was blessed with a revival, in which there were large additions. Like many other sister churches, they fell into a declension in the time of war. Soon after the war Mr. Dupuy moved to Kentucky." (Beale's *Semple* (1894), p. 264.)

CHAPTER XII

1772

JAMES WARE, JAMES PITMAN AND JOHN WALLER
IMPRISONED IN CAROLINE COUNTY JAIL

AMELIA COUNTY
County Seat—Amelia C. H.

We now come to the year 1772, when some concessions are being made to the persecuted Baptists. In fact, the powers that be have become so liberal in their views that they are actually willing to admit that the requests made in sundry petitions received from the Baptists were "*reasonable*." The House of Burgesses had received, on Monday, February 12, 1772, a Petition from the Baptists of the county of Sussex in which they prayed that they might be "treated with the same kind Indulgence in religious Matters as Quakers, Presbyterians, and other Protestant Dissenters enjoy."

Other petitions were received from several other counties and they were all referred to the Committee on Religion. Thirteen days later the Journal contains this reference to them and the conclusion which the "Committee" had reached:

"On Tuesday the 25th of February, 12 George III, 1772.

"Resolved, That it is the Opinion of this Committee, that the Petitions of Sundry Inhabitants of the Counties of Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Sussex, and Amelia, of the Society of Christians called *Baptists*, praying that they may be treated with the same kind Indulgence, in religious Matters, as Quakers, Presbyterians, and other Protestant Dissenters enjoy, so far as they relate to allowing the petitioners the same Toleration, in Matters of Religion, as is enjoyed by his Majesty's dissenting Protestant Subjects of Great Britain, under different Acts of Parliament, is reasonable."

Think of a father becoming so magnanimous that he is willing to treat all of his children alike, or of a King who shows the same "kind Indulgence" towards all his subjects.

The petition from Amelia was more specific as to details. It is copied from the Journal of the House of Burgesses for Monday, the 24th of February, 12 George III, 1772, and is as follows:

"A Petition of several Persons of the County of Amelia, whose Names are thereunto subscribed, setting forth that the Petitioners, being of the Community of Christians who worship God under the Denomination of Baptists, are restricted in their religious Exercises; that, if the Act of Toleration does not extend to this Colony, they are exposed to severe Persecution; and, if it does extend thither, and the Power of granting Licenses to Teachers be lodged, as is supposed, in the General Court alone the Petitioners must suffer considerable Inconveniences, not only because that Court sits not oftener than twice in the year, and then at a Place far remote, but because the said Court will admit a single Meeting-House and no More in one County; and that the Petitioners are loyal and quiet Subjects, whose tenets in no wise affect the State; and therefore praying a Redress of their Grievances, and that Liberty of Conscience may be secured to them."

As grudging as the concessions were that the Honorable House of Burgesses granted they were no doubt gratefully received, and the petitioners were beyond question greatly encouraged thereby.

1772

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY

County Seat—Chesterfield

AUGUSTINE EASTIN

Imprisoned in Chesterfield County

The next authentic case of imprisonment the date of which has been preserved, occurred about ten months after those of Middlesex. On page 207 of Semple's *History* (1810 edition), he gives a list of preachers, seven in number, who were imprisoned in Chesterfield jail, Augustine Eastin being one of them. The Court record of Elder Eastin's incarceration may be found in

Volume 5, page 109, of the Order Book of that county, and the Justices who presided were as follows:

	"Arch Cary	
Richard Royall		Thomas Worsham
Joseph Bass		Benj. Branch
Gent Justices."		

His trial took place at the June term of court in the year 1772, and the record of it follows:

"Augustine Easten appearing according to his Recognizance and it appearing That he had practised preaching in this County as a Baptist not having a license wch the Court adjudging to be a breach of good behavior & contrary to law Whereupon it is ordered that he enter into recognizance for being of good behavior for the space of one year next ensuing himself in the penalty of Fifty Pounds & two Sureties in penalty of Twenty-five pounds each and that he be committed til he do so."

When Morgan Edwards was in Virginia gathering his material in 1772, after stating that Augustine Eastin was an assistant to Elijah Craig, who was the pastor of the Rapid-ann church, he adds:

"The said Mr. Easting was in Chesterfield goal the 15th of May last. When our ministers were in this prison before they preached through the bars. But now col. C—— hath surrounded the prison with a high wall in order to prevent it."

Elder Eastin was a ministerial son of the Dover Church and one of those early preachers who migrated to Kentucky. He first settled in Fayette County in 1784, and subsequently moved to Bourbon County. "In conjunction with James Gerrard he formed Cowper's Run church in 1787. After his adoption of the Arian heresy this church was dropped from the Elkhorn Association in 1803." (Beale's *Semple* (1894), p. 139.)

Dr. Semple who does not forbear to speak the truth, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, about these old heroes, has this to say with reference to Augustine Eastin:

"Augustine Eastin, who removed to Kentucky, and who, though a man of some talent, was never any credit to the cause of truth. He appears always to have been carried away with the opinions of others whom he wished to imitate. Sometimes he was a professed and positive Calvinist; then shifting about he becomes as warm an Arminian. Then to the right again he is reconvinced that Calvinism is the only true way. Having moved to Kentucky he finds some professors of high standing in civil life who lean to the Arian scheme. Mr. Eastin soon becomes their champion, and even writes a pamphlet in defence of Arianism. This last change has made much noise among Baptists in Kentucky. But thanks to Divine protection, no Arian or Socinian Baptists are known in Virginia. Mr. Eastin's moral character has not been impeached. On this head both he and his coadjutors are men of high respectability." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 108.)

KING AND QUEEN COUNTY

County Seat King and Queen C. H.

JAMES GREENWOOD AND WILLIAM LOVAL

"Few ministers have pursued a more unexceptionable course," than James Greenwood, according to Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), page 127. "A blameless life is one of the most important qualifications which the Scriptures require in him who fills the office of a bishop. Without this, the most splendid talents will only prove a curse to the interests of religion. This will enable a man of comparatively weak capacity to do good, where one of strong intellect but equivocal piety will be utterly useless. This was the most striking peculiarity in reference to Elder Greenwood. * * * Notwithstanding the lovely character sustained by this servant of the Redeemer, he did not escape the rage of those who, in his day, persecuted the church of God and wasted it. Indeed it was not to be expected. If the Lamb of God was led to the slaughter his servants may well calculate on unkind treatment. Elder Greenwood was apprehended while actually engaged in proclaiming the gospel of peace. He was standing not far from the place now occupied by Bruington Meeting-house, King and Queen County, when he was rudely seized and forced to prison."

JAMES GREENWOOD, WILLIAM LOVAL

Imprisoned in King and Queen County Sixteen Days

This is the only instance in which it seems the civil powers were invoked in King and Queen County to silence Baptist preachers. The jail and all the old records have been destroyed, thereby shutting up the investigator to a few brief references to this event, by our own historians. Semple's account in his *History*, page 22, is as follows:

"In August 1772, James Greenwood and Wm. Loyal were preaching, not far from the place where *Bruington Meeting House* now stands, in the county of King & Queen, when they were seized by virtue of a warrant, and immediately conveyed to prison."

Before giving the rest of Semple's account we want to write into the record, the testimony of a ministerial son of Bruington Church, with reference to the exact spot where these men of God were seized while preaching. This son was Dr. Chas. H. Ryland, whose name is beautifully and thoroughly woven into the history of Richmond College. It is interesting to note that he was the man who offered the resolution, at the General Association in Staunton in 1872 which led to the wonderful "Memorial Movement," which stirred the Baptist ranks in Virginia from center to circumference as they had never been stirred before. He was intensely interested in the preservation of our history, the founder of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, and its secretary for thirty-three years. Dr. Beale called attention to these facts in his obituary of Dr. Ryland closing with the following beautiful and deserved tribute:

"He did more for the discovery and preservation of the materials of our denominational history than any other man of his day. He was more active than any other in inducing churches to observe centennial services with a view to compiling and placing on record the events of their history; he was instrumental in securing, in connection with the General Association, perhaps all the strictly historical meetings that have been held. His devotion to the work burned like a holy fire on the altar of his heart, till strength and

life failed him, and the future historian of Virginia Baptists will pause at times amidst his toilsome task to take heart over the help received from him, and to breathe a grateful benediction on the name of Charles Hill Ryland."

This burning zeal for all our denominational history has been mentioned to show the trend of his mind and the affection of his heart, in order that the reader will be better prepared to appreciate a choice bit of information Dr. Ryland obtained from some unknown source and jotted down on a flyleaf in the back of his Bible. His son, Prof. Garnett Ryland, happened to mention it to the compiler of these notes, and it was at his request that Prof. Ryland has copied it for this work. It has to do with Bruington Church, Dr. Ryland's old home church, and the church that sent him into the ministry, and it must have given him a great deal of genuine pleasure to record these facts that are nowhere else to be found:

"Previous to the constitution of Bruington Church the Baptists of the neighborhood worshipped in Ware's barn 'across the swamp' from my father's residence where Wiley and subsequently Don Brown lived. Then an arbor was erected where Dentist T. M. Henley now lives and almost in sight of the present house of worship. Here James Greenwood and William Loyal were seized while preaching and conveyed to King & Queen jail singing 'Life is the time to serve the Lord' and gave notice they would preach the next Lord's Day from the jail windows.

C. H. Ryland,

May, 1873."

In the above quotation is a line of the hymn that Greenwood and Loyal sang on their way to jail. Continuing Dr. Semple's account, we are told that:

"After the first day and night they were allowed the bounds. Having continued in prison sixteen days, i. e. until court, they were discharged, upon giving bond for good behavior. At this season they received the most unbounded kindness from Mr. Harwood the jailer, and his lady. They preached regularly while in prison, and to much purpose."

It is axiomatic that no man likes his jailer. There are exceptions, of course, but these exceptions only prove the rule.

The "unbounded kindness" on the part of this jailer and his wife made them one of those exceptions, which has been noted by no less a personage than the world's immortal poet, Shakespeare, when he declared that it was:

- - - - "Seldom when
The steeled goaler is the friend of men."

But there is another exceptional case, in the annals of Baptist history, which proves this rule, and it affords us pleasure to record it:

"The respectability of Bunyan's character and the propriety of his conduct, while in prison at Bedford, England, appear to have operated very powerfully on the mind of the jailer, who showed him much kindness, in permitting him to go out and visit his friends occasionally, and once to take a journey to London. The following anecdote is told respecting the jailer and Mr. Bunyan:

"It being known to some of his persecutors, in London, that he was often out of prison, they sent an officer to talk with the jailer on the subject: and, in order to discover the fact, he was to get there in the middle of the night. Bunyan was at home with his family, but so restless that he could not sleep; he therefore acquainted his wife that, though the jailer had given him liberty to stay till the morning, yet, from his uneasiness, he must immediately return. He did so, and the jailer blamed him for coming in at such an unseasonable hour. Early in the morning the messenger came, and interrogating the jailer, said,

" "Are all the prisoners safe?"

" "Yes."

" "Is John Bunyan safe?"

" "Yes."

" "Let me see him."

"He was called, and appeared, and all was well. After the messenger was gone, the jailer, addressing Mr. Bunyan, said,

" "Well, you may go in and out again just when you think proper, for you know when to return better than I can tell you'." (*Remarkable Providences* (1865), pp. 167 and 168.)

Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), page 127, gives this additional information about James Greenwood and, of course, it applies equally to William Loyal:

"But he was not without consolation. The Lord was with him in his dungeon and lightened his chain.

"Nor was the time in his Master's service lost," to continue Dr. Taylor's account, "for while in prison he lifted up his voice and proclaimed liberty to the captives of sin. As the sound of salvation was heard from the grated windows of his cell the multitudes without wept, and many believed unto eternal life. Such was the effect of his ministrations that his foes judged it most politic to open the prison doors and let him go free."

On page 46 of a tract entitled *Religious Liberty and The Baptists*, and published by the American Baptist Publication Society, of Philadelphia, there is this list of those said to have been imprisoned in King and Queen County:

"Greenwood, Waller, Ware, William Loyal, John Shackelford and others, in King and Queen."

This writer has been unable to find any authority for this statement save in the cases of James Greenwood and William Loyal, who beyond doubt *were* imprisoned in King and Queen. It is true that all the others were imprisoned in some county, but not in King and Queen.

This imprisonment of Greenwood and Loyal in King and Queen County was but a dozen years after the *first* Methodist had arrived in America and the same year the society was established in Virginia. Dr. John Alfred Faulkner tells the story of the genesis of the Methodist movement in this country in his book, *The Methodist* (1903), pages 39, 40:

"In 1760 a part of the Palatine Irish left the village of Balligarane for America, arriving in New York August 10, 1760. Among them were Barbara Heck, the mother of Methodism in the United States and Canada, and Philip Embury, the first class-leader and preacher in the new world. Not all were Methodists, and those that were—except Barbara and Embury—lost their zeal. The oft repeated

story how Barbara started the first Methodist preaching is too good not to be told again. The patient and invaluable researches of the late John Atkinson corroborate it in every particular. It appears that a company of people had met in the evening to play cards, probably in Barbara Heck's own kitchen. Coming upon them suddenly, Barbara, in her indignation, swept the cards into her apron, threw them into the fire and rebuked the players, then put on her bonnet, went immediately to the home of Embury, and exclaimed:

"Philip, you must preach to us, or we shall all go to hell together, and God will require our blood at your hands!"

"Where shall I preach?" said Philip.

"Preach in your own house."

"Who will come to hear me?"

"I will come to hear you," urged the enthusiastic matron.

"She went and gathered three or four people and Embury preached to them, and thus began the Methodist movement in America."

This was the beginning of Methodism in America, and Dr. Eckenrode states that it was in 1772 that they were established in Virginia:

"The Methodist came into the colony a few years before the Revolution. Robert Williams, who settled in Norfolk in 1772, established the society in Virginia." (H. J. Eckenrode's *Special Report on the Separation of Church and State in Virginia* (1910), p. 34.)

The *Virginia Gazette* for July¹ 30, 1772, published the following notices about the activities of the Methodists in and around Norfolk at this time:

"Extract of a Letter from Norfolk, July 28.

"All the Ladies, and almost every order of People here are become Proselytes to Methodism, the Church is quite deserted. I dare say there were near three Thousand People to hear Mr. Pilmore on Sunday, in the Fields. They flock to him from all Quarters, and invite him to preach in every Neighborhood. The Women call him *The dear divine Man*."

In the same issue of the *Gazette* there is this anecdote about the clergy :

“Several of the Clergy Complaining to the Bishop of —, at his Visitation, of the Progress and success of certain Methodist Preachers; his Lordship replied; the most effectual Way, Gentlemen, of silencing them, will be to out-live, out-preach them.”

This indicates the success Methodism was enjoying even at this early date, but let it be remembered that as a society it had no part in the struggle for Religious Liberty in Virginia. John Esten Cooke's *Virginia* (1884), page 392, states :

“In this bitter antagonism to the Establishment the Methodists had no part; they were ‘a society within the Church,’ and advocated only a more evangelical spirit in worship.”

Attention has already been drawn to the very courteous letter of William Green to Elder Nathaniel Saunders in 1767, and also the bombastic attitude of William Bradley in 1770, towards this same minister but the outcome of both of these encounters is now shrouded in mystery.

We come now to notice a much more dangerous foe who entered the arena in 1772, as Nathaniel Saunders' antagonist. Elder Saunders had no doubt been making spiritual raids upon the territory of the Establishment within the bounds of Culpeper County, and a Grand Jury of this county, which met in August, taking cognizance of these preaching tours, presented him for “unlawful preaching.” The clerk of said county issued a command upon the Sheriff of the adjoining county of Orange, in the following high-sounding legal terms :

NATHANIEL SAUNDERS

Summoned to Appear in Culpeper County

“George the third by the grace of God of Great Britain France Ireland King Defender of the Faith &c To the Sheriff of Orange County Greeting we command you that you summons Nathaniel Saunders to appear before the Justices of our County Court of Culpeper on the third Monday in October next then and there to answer the present-

ment of a Grand Jury made agst him for unlawful Preaching and have then there this Writ Witness John Jameson Clerk of our sd County at the Courthouse of the sd County the 22nd. Day of August in the Twelfth year of our Reign.

John Jameson."

The original document, from which this was copied is unique and is on file in the Virginia Baptist Historical Society. As George III succeeded to the throne in 1760, and the Clerk dated his command on the "22nd Day of August in the Twelfth year of our Reign," we conclude that this summons was issued in 1772.

It would afford much pleasure to follow this trail further, but the dusts of a century and a half have so completely obliterated all trace of any subsequent steps taken by the county authorities in this case that it is impossible to do so. One year later however, the authorities did succeed in running down their prey, as appears under date of August 21, 1773.

1772

CAROLINE COUNTY

County Seat—Bowling Green

The Caroline County officers go the officials of many other counties "one better," in their sentences against these unruly preachers. The length of time imposed in each of the judgments rendered in this county is invariably set down as "a year and a daye." Perhaps these "Gentlemen Justices" regarded preaching as a felony and therefore their sentences were for more than a year. In order to be classed as a felony now an act for which a person is arrested must carry a charge of more than a year. It is for this reason that so many sentences consist of "a year and a day," as the minimum sentences for such an offense.

JAMES WARE

Imprisoned in Caroline Jail Sixteen Days

The same magistrate, or Justice of the Peace, who issued the warrant for the arrest of Lewis Craig in 1771, is still "on the job" in 1772. At the August 12th term of court of Caroline

County two laymen, James Ware and James Pitman are presented to answer the charge of having preaching in their houses. They were tried before Anthony Thornton and Robert Gilchrist, Gentlemen Justices, and in the Caroline County Order Book for 1772-1776, page 91, is the record of the court's action and the amount of bond required for such a crime:

"James Ware by virtue of a warrant from under the hand of Anthony Thornton, Gent, & pursuant to his recognizance appeared. The Court on hearing the testimony are of the opinion he is guilty of suffering teaching and preaching contrary to the Canons of the Church of England and a breach of the Act of Assembly prohibiting unlawful assemblies as in the warrant charged against him. It is therefore ordered that he give security himself in the sum of ten pounds and two securities in the sum of five pounds each for his good behaviour a year and a day."

JAMES PITMAN

Imprisoned in Caroline Jail Sixteen Days

His companion in "crime" was given the same sentence. The court record of James Pitman's case is found in Caroline County Order Book for 1772-1776, page 92, as follows:

"James Pitman by virtue of a warrant from under the hand & seal of Anthony Thornton Gent. & pursuant to his Recognizance appeared & confessed that there was an assembly of people met at his house to the number of ten and endeavored to teach and preach as in the warrant charged against him which the court adjudged to be a breach of the act of assembly for prohibiting unlawful assemblies. Therefore it is ordered that he give security himself in the sum of ten pounds and two securities in the sum of five pounds each for his good behaviour a year and a day."

Then follows another entry on the same page of the Order Book recording the fact that executive clemency was shown these two accused laymen in that they were allowed the prison bounds, and permitting them to give bond that they would stay within the prescribed limits until they gave security for their "good behaviour a year and a day." This unique entry is as follows:

JAMES WARE

Imprisoned in Caroline Jail Sixteen Days

"James Ware, James Pitman, William Taliaferro & Christopher Singleton, personally appeared and acknowledged themselves indebted to our sovereign Lord the King in the sum of twenty pounds each to be levied of their several and respective lands and chattels, rendered in case the sd. James Ware and James Pitman shall depart out of the prison bounds 'til they give security in the sum of ten pounds each and two securities each in the sum of five pounds each for their good behaviour twelve months and a Daye."

McGill's *History of the Middle District Association* mentions this incident in the account of Upper Zion Church in Caroline County:

"In 1773, James Ware and James Pitman (of this vicinity) were imprisoned sixteen days, for having preaching in their home." (McGill's *History*, p. 27.)

Both McGill and Dr. Semple are evidently in error in stating that these men were imprisoned in "1773," for both of the entries in the Order Book give "1772" as the year in which this event took place. However, Dr. Semple's account gives this additional information on page 120 of the 1810 edition of his *History*:

"James Ware and James Pitman were imprisoned sixteen days, for having preaching in their houses. They offered to give bond for good behaviour, generally, but not for permitting preaching in their houses in particular. This, at first, was refused them, but afterwards was acceded to, and they were discharged. Of these, James Pitman is still living, and a member of the Tuckahoe church."

"Tuckahoe church was located in the northwestern section of Caroline county. In 1819 the name of the church was changed to Upper Zion." (Beale's *Semple* (1894), p. 156.)

On August 15, 1772, or three days after James Ware and James Pitman had been tried in the county court of Caroline for having preaching in their homes, there was an incident in Williamsburg which proved that the determination and frequency

with which our Baptist brethren had gone to prison and suffered other indignities, rather than yield a God-given right, was making its impression upon the inhabitants of the Colony—as surely as the continual dropping water wears away a stone. This incident proves that even the students of the College of William and Mary were thinking about the issue, and one of their number, James Madison (who was a second cousin of President James Madison and destined to be elected Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia), delivered an oration before the body of that institution on the subject of Civil and Religious Liberty. This lengthy oration reprinted in the *Bulletin of the College of William and Mary* for November 1937, was dedicated to the Reverend Samuel Henley, who was professor of moral philosophy in William and Mary at that time. Mr. Madison points out that the duties of the *magistrate* do not extend into the realm of religion, but are confined exclusively to civil matters. This oration contains the following sentiments which are the more remarkable when the time of their delivery is considered:

“I am well aware that even the Idea of a free Toleration, in Matters of Religion, has been a Source of endless Apprehensions, no less weak than inhuman. Such indeed is the connecting Tie in civil and religious Affairs, that seem almost inseparably dependent on each other. But should we revert to the original Principles of Society, we shall find that it was constituted only for the Preservation of civil Interests: That the duty of the Magistrate respects these Things alone: That his Jurisdiction extends only to civil Concerns: And that all civil Power, Right and Dominion is bounded and confined to the only Care of promoting these Things. As to practical, or speculative Opinions, the judicious Locke has declared that, “if Truth make not her own Way into the Understanding by her own Light, she will be but the weaker for any borrowed Force, Violence can add to her.

“To draw the exact Lines between Light and Shade, is a Difficulty above the Reach of human Art. It were no less impracticable in this short Compass to discriminate the Boundaries of civil and religious Liberty. We should, however, beware, lest by attempting to promote, we in Fact retard the great Ends of Society. Systematic Impositions enslave the Mind. Such is the Nature of the Understanding,

that Restriction cramps its Progress. Though worn as Armour by the strong, it destroys even their Activity, while upon the weak, it turns into a Load, and cripples the Body it was designed to protect. The theoretical Knowledge of Mankind is susceptible of daily Improvement, or Refinements which not only sublimates Religion, but every Science that glows in the Poet, or shines in the Philosopher. The true Policy of every State will then render those Establishments which are requisite as generous and unconfined as the good Order of Society shall permit. In vain it is urged, that the free Exercise of Opinions will have the same pernicious Tendency in religious Societies as in political, since the same Reason which argues the Non-toleration of the one, evinces the Justice of the other. The one is the proper Object of the Magistrate, the other will not admit of his Interference. That the Well-Being of Society has a Retrospect to religious and moral Principles, that Purity of Life may be the ready Means to the Formation of Citizens, Soldiers, or Patriots, will admit of no Doubt. Numerous are the Cases in civil Society, closely united to its principal Welfare, wherein the Interference of the Magistrate would argue the wildest Absurdity. There are Obligations, mediate, and immediate. Each may be equally productive of the best Effects. But this Difference will ever attend them; the one must derive the necessity of Practice from the Enforcements of Law; the other from Motives purely social. 'In this 'tis God directs; in that 'tis Man'."

JOHN WALLER

Imprisoned in Caroline Jail Ten Days

One month after these two laymen were presented for having preaching in their houses, John Waller appeared before the same court and acknowledged that he had preached in the county. The Caroline County Order Book for 1772-1776, page 107, contains the following record:

"Edmund Pendleton	} Gentlemen Justices.
Robert Gilchrist	
Sam Hawes	

"Sept. Court. 1772. John Waller being brought before the Court pursuant to a warrant acknowledged the charge against him for his preaching at Henry Goodloes. Ordered

that he be & remain in the custody of the Sheriff 'till he give security himself in the sum of £ 50:0 and two securities in the sum of £ 25:0 each for his good behaviour a year and a daye."

This writer has been unable to find any definite reference to this imprisonment of John Waller in any of our denominational histories. Benedict's *History* (1813), Vol. II, page 399, gives him credit for having "lain in four different jails, for the space of one hundred and thirteen days, in all." It is known that he languished in Fredericksburg jail for forty-three days, in Middlesex jail for forty-six days, and later on he was in Essex jail for fourteen days. This leaves ten days to be accounted for, and it seems conclusive that this time was spent in the Caroline jail.

Perhaps the firmness of James Ware and James Pitman in refusing to give bond that they would not allow preaching in their houses had something to do with the magistrates not issuing a warrant for the arrest of Henry Goodloe, at whose house John Waller preached.

There are only two references, that this author has been able to find, to the effect that Patrick Henry defended imprisoned preachers in Caroline County jail, and neither one is specific. One of these is found in *Patrick Henry, Life, Correspondence and Speeches*, by William Wirt Henry (1891), Vol. I, page 119, and is as follows:

"Rev. John Waller, with other Baptist ministers, were imprisoned in Caroline County for preaching, as we are told by Semple; and it was doubtless in reference to them that the following statement was made by Judge Spencer Roane, in his letter to Mr. Wirt, in which he said: 'Mr. Pendleton, on the bench of Caroline court, justified the imprisonment of several Baptist preachers, who were defended by Mr. Henry, on the heinous charge of worshipping God according to the dictates of their own consciences'."

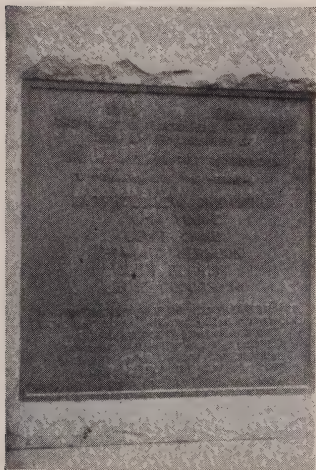
The other reference is found in a footnote of Dr. Beale's revision of Semple's *History*, page 32, where he makes this positive statement:

"Mr. Henry does appear to have been counsel for one or more imprisoned Baptist preachers in Caroline county."

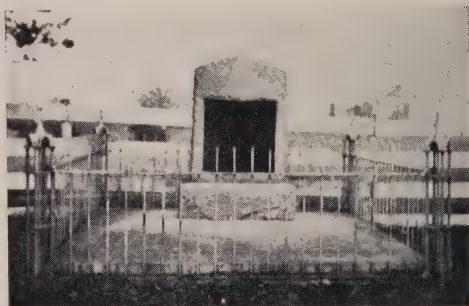
The Lord had two "Jameses" and one "John" among his twelve disciples. Caroline County officials imprisoned nine of His modern disciples, three of whom were named "James" and three were named "John." And the last "John" to be imprisoned was perhaps the greatest of them all—John Waller.

MONUMENT IN BOWLING GREEN

The Dutch artist, Hobbema, had been dead a hundred years before the world acknowledged his genius, and the last of these imprisoned preachers had been dead nearly the same length of time before our Virginia Baptist people began to mark in some enduring way the places where they suffered and by so doing rendered such valuable service to our denomination in particular, and the whole world in general. A worthy movement in this direction and perhaps the first of its kind in Virginia, was begun when a monument was unveiled at Bowling Green, the county seat of Caroline County, on Sunday afternoon, July 9, 1922, to perpetuate the names and the memory of six illustrious heroes of the Cross, who were imprisoned in the gaol of that county for worshipping God according to the dictates of their own consciences. The inscription on this monument at Bowling Green follows:



TABLET ON BOWLING
GREEN MONUMENT



MONUMENT AT BOWLING GREEN

"1771 1922

This tablet is placed here in the year 1922 by the churches of
THE HERMON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

to

commemorate the heroism of

BARTHOLOMEW CHEWNING

JOHN YOUNG

LEWIS CRAIG

EDWARD HERNDON

JOHN BURRUS

JAMES GOODRICH

Who, by the order of the court, 151 years ago, were imprisoned in the Caroline jail near this spot, on the charge of 'Teaching and preaching the gospel without having Episcopal ordination or a license from the General Court'."

The site of this monument is at the intersection of two principal streets in the town of Bowling Green, and on the edge of the farm where originally stood the jail in which these men were imprisoned. Mr. T. D. Coghill, the owner of that part of the farm lying in Bowling Green donated the site.

On Sunday afternoon, July 9, 1922, in the presence of a deeply interested throng, coming from far and near, this tablet was unveiled, Rev. L. M. Ritter, the pastor of the Bowling Green Baptist Church, being the chief promoter of this worthy enterprise, the genesis and growth of which is set forth by him in a twelve-page pamphlet, bearing the title, *A Memorial to Imprisoned Baptist Preachers—How and Why*. In this pamphlet Pastor Ritter well says:

"The greatest memorial to the imprisoned preachers is the fact that the principles and ideas for which they suffered are now accepted by all Christian denominations, and are imbedded in the various state laws and the Constitution of the United States. But 'Lest we forget,' and knowing human nature's capacity to pervert and falsify history, many of us feel that this monument should be placed here where all may see and he who runs may read."

On the day this monument of enduring granite and bronze was unveiled with impressive services, Prof. Garnett Ryland, of the University of Richmond, made the chief address, on "Fore-runners of Freedom," which was published in the Fredericksburg, Virginia, *Free Lance*, October 5, 1922.

In addition to prescribing the kind of punishment preachers must endure for preaching the Gospel without legal sanction, the authorities were busy in dealing with other inhabitants for various offenses during the year 1772. For example there is a brief notice in the *Virginia Gazette* for November 5, 1772, which gives an intimate view of the kind of cases that were tried before the General Court at that time and the punishment that was inflicted for certain crimes and misdemeanors:

"This Day, at the General Court, John Moore and William Moseley, for Horsestealing, had Sentence of Death pronounced upon them. Charles William Montague, Thomas Robinson, and Catherine Campbell, for Theft, were burnt in the Hand. And Sarah Hall, who was found guilty of Child Murder, received the Governor's Pardon."

Strange as being "burnt in the hand" for theft may appear to us in this day, still stranger was that custom of imprisoning poor ministers for preaching the gospel of freedom.

CHAPTER XIII

1773

JEREMIAH MOORE IMPRISONED IN ALEXANDRIA JAIL—
PERHAPS THREE TIMESTHE CIVIL AUTHORITIES BUSY ABOUT
OTHER MATTERS

There seem to have been no imprisonments to chronicle for the winter months of 1773, and for obvious reasons. Doubtless there were fewer meetings at this time of the year, because of the many difficulties the inhabitants would encounter in attempting to attend them,—such as bad weather, bad roads, etc., and the same physical barriers would stand in the way of the itinerant preachers making appointments and keeping them. However, we can not think that these heroes of the Cross were altogether idle during the winter, although they must have been greatly hindered in their work. This being true, there were fewer opportunities for the civil and ecclesiastical authorities to lay hands upon them, and so we have only a few cases of preachers being apprehended and thrust into prison during the winter months of any year. But there were some who remained over in different jails during the winter, like the autumn leaves clinging to the trees, and for the same reason, because they could not get loose.

But we are not to suppose that the authorities were altogether idle either, for they had many problems to solve and other culprits with whom to deal. In fact they had some of the same problems that confront us who live in this enlightened twentieth century, such as Money, Whiskey, and Gambling. The sowing of such fertile seed always produces a bountiful crop, and some provision had to be made for the harvest. So it came to pass that the first asylum for the insane in this country was opened in the Capital city of Williamsburg, during the year 1773, and is still regarded as one of the greatest institutions of its kind in the land.

Penurious individuals are not confined to any particular class or clime, but are to be found all over the world, and the Colonial

Capital, according to the *Virginia Gazette* for January 28, 1773, furnished a conspicuous example, which is quaintly described in the following notice:

“Williamsburg, January 28.

“(Deaths) Mr. James Nicholson, for many Years Steward and Gardner to William and Mary College; which offices he discharged much to the Satisfaction of all concerned, and greatly to his own Emoluments, having amassed a Sum (by following Father Abraham’s Maxim, *Save what you can, and what you get hold*) very rarely acquired by People in his Station. His Labour of almost thirty Years, after much *raking and scraping*, goes to his Relations in Scotland.”

For some time the colony had been greatly agitated because of the counterfeit money that was being circulated, and the February 25th issue of the *Virginia Gazette* gave this brief but, welcome notice:

“Captain Lightfoot arrived in Williamsburg from Pittsylvania with several men under strong guard, who had been captured in the act of counterfeiting the money of the colony.”

The same *Gazette*, issued on “April Fool’s Day,” gave this account of a man who perhaps fooled himself worse than he fooled anyone else:

“Granville County, North Carolina
February 19, 1773.

“Departed this Life, in the fiftieth Year of his Age, Thomas Low Thimble, after a long Series of Drunkenness. It may with Truth be said, that no Man ever died less regretted: The Sound of his last Trumpet gave a general Joy to all his Friends, as well as those who had the Misfortune to be his Acquaintance. Take heed, ye Sons of Bacchus, that when Death comes with his Summons you may not be catching napping; as you see was the case with Mr. Thimble.”

The *Virginia Gazette* for April 29, 1773, contained this notice in very prominent type:

“The Great
Cock Fight,
Between the
Upland and Lowland Gentlemen,
Will be fought at Williamsburg
on Tuesday the 25th of May.” (1773)

The Cock Fight came off on schedule time, and on the 27th of the same month the *Gazette* simply announced, without comment, that the “Cock Fight” was won by the “Uplanders.” This barbarous sport, which is said to have originated with the Athenians, was very popular in the mother country and was at one time patronized by royalty. It was prohibited in 1654, and other acts were passed with a view of putting it down, but it continued to exist for a long time, both in England and the English colonies. No doubt the stakes in Williamsburg were large and the crowd immense. And this fight, mark you, took place at the Capital and must have met with the sanction of the civil powers at least.

The people of that day had to deal with the problem of *money*—the inordinate desire to make it, horde it, and squander it—and their attention is called to the habit of tarrying long at the wine and its inevitable results. But the “Cock Fight” came off with only the brief notice of who won, without any warning or innuendo. Perhaps it was too popular a sport and too many people had purses up on the outcome of the issue for a newspaper to oppose it. These are some of the things that claimed the attention of the inhabitants of the province during the early part of the year 1773.

But every cloud has a silver lining. In the midst of much selfishness there is this act of unselfishness. During the same week of the “Cock Fight” this historic incident occurred, which has projected itself on down through the years up to the present time. The *Gazette* announced:

“Williamsburg, May 20. (1773)

“The Virginia, Howard Esten, from London, arrived in York River, has brought in the Statue of our late excellent Governor, Lord Botetourt, which was voted to his memory by the General Assembly in 1771. It is to be placed in the Capitol, and we hear cost 700 Guineas.”

This statue originally stood in the Capitol, but now adorns the main walk of the College of William and Mary, which leads to the famous Wren building—the oldest academic building in America. This author never passes this antique marble statue without remembering that it represents the man who was kind to some of our Baptist preachers during the days of persecution.

While Lord Botetourt was Governor he had graciously received an humble Baptist preacher (James Ireland), and listened favorably to his request for a licensed meeting-house in Culpeper County. Others in the Capital had met him with contemptuous, overbearing and offensive rudeness, but to his credit, be it said, the Governor was of a different stamp. He received Mr. Ireland's petition with "all the graces of a gentleman." If there were no other reasons for revering his memory the Baptists would find sufficient grounds in this one gracious act. But Morgan Edwards makes the statement that Lord Botetourt "personally interested himself" in another Baptist preacher (William Fristoe), when he sought to be "qualified according to the toleration act." So the Baptists of that day and this owe a double debt of gratitude to the "beloved" Botetourt.

1773

Attention has been called to the fact that there was no specific law in the Virginia colony which could be rightfully construed as applying to these preachers for proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and so the authorities resorted to the vagrant law, and justified their course in arresting them as vagrants—men without any settled habitation. So exasperated did the authorities sometimes become that it is reasonable to suppose that they would have been highly pleased, could they have found some law by which they could have resorted to harsher measures in dealing with them. James Ireland said he expected to be brought out of jail on every court day and whipped, but it seemed the law didn't reach that far. While no official statement to that effect has been found it is not at all unreasonable to suppose that they may have appealed to the mother country for the enactment of laws that would furnish them with the power to administer more drastic measures in trying to silence them. Perhaps Lord Chatham's

statement, which was made in a debate with Dr. Drummond in 1773 in the House of Lords, had reference to Virginia as well as England, when he said: "Laws in support of ecclesiastical power are pleaded for, which it would shock humanity to execute." We can but wonder what these laws were. But read Lord Chatham's full statement:

LORD CHATHAM ON TOLERATION

"In the debate in the House of Lords, on the motion for an enlargement of the Toleration Act in the year 1773, Dr. Drummond, Archbishop of York, vehemently opposed the motion, stigmatized the dissenting ministers as 'men of close ambition.'

"Lord Chatham replied, 'This was judged uncharitably, and whoever brought such a charge against them, without proof, defamed.' Here he paused, but presently proceeded—'The dissenting ministers are represented as men of close ambition; they are so, my Lords, and their ambition is to keep close to the college of fishermen, not of cardinals, and to the doctrine of inspired apostles, and not to the decrees of interested and inspiring bishops: They contend for the scriptural creed and spiritual worship; we have a Calvinistic creed, a Popish liturgy, and an Arminian clergy.

"'The reformation has laid open the scriptures to all; let not the bishops shut them again. Laws in support of ecclesiastical power are pleaded for, which it would shock humanity to execute. It is said that religious sects have done great mischief, when they were not under restraint; but history affords no proof that sects have ever been mischievous, when they were not oppressed and persecuted by the ruling church.'" (*The Roanoke Religious Correspondent*, or, *Monthly Evangelical Visitor*, Milton, N. C., Oct., 1823, Vol. II, No. 10, pp. 158, 159.)

The next Baptist preachers to run afoul the Virginia authorities were John Weatherford and John Tanner. Little is known of Elder Tanner, but John Weatherford became a noted preacher and one who suffered much for conscience's sake. We shall see presently that he experienced such inhuman treatment, law or no law, that it is "*shocking to humanity*" even at this late day simply to contemplate it.

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY

County Seat—Chesterfield

JOHN TANNER

John Weatherford and John Tanner were apprehended in Chesterfield County on May 15, 1773, by virtue of a warrant issued by Col. Archibald Cary.

On the day of their arrest John Tanner gave a Peace Bond, the original of which is still preserved and there follows a copy of it made by Mr. Philip V. Coghill, the present (1934) Clerk of Chesterfield County Court.

"May 1773

"Know all men by these presents that we John Tanner, John Clay and Richard Cheatham, are held and formally bound unto our Sovereign Lord the King in the sum of Three Hundred Pound Sterling money of Great Britain, that is to say that said John Tanner, in the sum of One Hundred pound and the said John Clay and Richard Cheatham each in the sum of Fifty Pounds, to be eleived on our goods and chattels for the use of our said Lord the King to the which payment well and trully to be made we bind ourselves our heirs &c.

"It witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals this 15th day of May 1773.

"The condition of the above obligation is that whereas the above John Tanner an itinerant person calling himself an an/baptist preacher taken by my warrant and brought before, did on his examination confess that he has at divers times convened numbers of people in this County and more particular on this day did convene numbers and preach to them in this County, not being qualified by law so to do, which is contrary to law and tends to disturb the peace and good government of this colony. Now if the said John Tanner shall personally appear at the next Court to be holden for this County of Chesterfield there to answer such charge as shall be made against him for his said offence, and do not depart without leave of the Court, and shall moreover keep the peace and be of good behavior in the meanwhile then this

obligation to be void, other ways to remain in full force and virtue.

JOHN TANNER

JOHN CLAY

RICHARD CHEATHAM."

"Acknowledged before me
Archibald Cary."

It is worthy of notice that Elder Clay (who was also confined at one time in a Virginia jail for preaching the Gospel), was one of Elder Tanner's bondsmen, and the careful reader may have discovered an error in this bond. "Three Hundred Pounds" is the sum first named, but when it was apportioned among the prisoner and his bondmen only "Two Hundred Pounds" were levied.

When the court convened nearly three weeks later both John Tanner and John Weatherford were present, and were tried before seven "Gentlemen Justices" on June 4, 1773.

JOHN TANNER

Imprisoned in Chesterfield County

Duration of Imprisonment Unknown

The official Court record is found in Order Book Number 5, of the Chesterfield County records, pages 278 and 280, the names of the Justices and the day the Court convened being found on page 278 as follows:

"At a court held for Chesterfield County, June 4, 1773.

"Present, Archibald Cary, John Archer, Joseph Bass, Bernard Markham, Benja. Branch, John Archer, Junr., and Francis Goode, Gent. Justices."

Then on page 280 the court's action is recorded as follows:

"John Tanner & John Weatherford appearing in Court being taken up by a Warrant issued by Archibald Cary Gent. for that purpose and acknowledging themselves to be of the religious Sect called Baptists and that they had practiced preaching and assembling the people together in this and other Counties of this Colony without having any License

for so doing On Consideration of the premises the Court adjudging them on that account guilty of a Breach of the peace & good Behaviour Where upon Ordered that they give Surety for their good Behavior and keeping the peace for the space of one year each in the penalty of £50 with two Sureties in penalty of £25 each and be committed to Goal til they do so."

Perhaps John Tanner did not remain in prison very long, but gave bond and returned to his own State. This is highly probable for the following reason. Three months later John Weatherford, and another preacher, who meanwhile had been incarcerated in the Chesterfield jail were denied certain privileges the jailer had granted them, but Elder Tanner's name is not mentioned. The conclusion is that he was either released previous to the September court, or did not share in the privileges which were withdrawn by the order of this court. Then, too, the following statement from Beale's *Semple*, footnote, page 271, leads to the same conclusion:

"Elder Tanner appears to have begun his ministerial career in Halifax county, North Carolina, where, as early as 1773, he gathered a small church in Rocky Swamp. He was later pastor in Edgecombe county. He removed to Kentucky about the year 1784, and was probably the founder of Tate's Creek church in Madison county. He labored later in Fayette county, and in 1795 settled near Clear Creek church in Woodford. His next removal was to Shelby county, whence he emigrated to Missouri, where he died, near Cape Gerrardeau, in 1812."

From the above it appears that it was during the same year of his imprisonment in Chesterfield that he gathered a church in North Carolina, perhaps that summer. How long he remained in prison no records as yet show, but his companion, John Weatherford, was confined for five months.

A few years after Elder Tanner's Chesterfield experience he had one of an entirely different nature, down in his native state, which shows to what length these old heroes would go for the Gospel's sake:

JOHN TANNER

*Shot with a Large Horse Pistol
Seventeen Shot*

“A certain woman by the name of Dawson, in the town of Windsor, N. C., had reason to hope her soul was converted, saw baptism to be a duty for a believer to comply with, and expressed a great desire to join the church at Cashie, under the care of Elder Dargan. Her husband, who was violently opposed to it, and a great persecutor, had threatened, that if any man baptized his wife he would shoot him: accordingly baptism was deferred for some considerable time. At length Elder Tanner was present at Elder Dargan’s meeting, and Mrs. Dawson applied to the church for baptism, expressing her desire to comply with her duty. She related her experience, and was received; and as Elder Dargan was an infirm man, he generally when other ministers were present, would apply to them to administer the ordinance in his stead. He therefore requested Elder Tanner to perform the duty of baptism at this time. Whether Elder Tanner was apprised of Dawson’s threatening or not; or whether he thought it was his duty to obey God rather than man, we are unable to say; but so it was he baptized Sister Dawson. And in June following, which was in the year 1777, Elder Tanner was expected to preach at Sandy Run meeting-house, and Dawson, hearing of the appointment, came up from Windsor to Norfleet’s ferry on Roanoke, and lay in wait near the banks of the river, and when Elder Tanner (who was in company with Elder Dargan) ascended the bank from the ferry landing, Dawson, being a few yards from him, shot him with a large horseman’s pistol, and seventeen shot went into his thigh, one of which was a large buckshot, that went through his thigh, and lodged between his breeches and thigh on the other side. Elder Burket was present when the doctor (who was immediately sent for) took part of the shot out of his thigh. In this wounded condition Elder Tanner was carried to the house of Mr. Elisha Williams, in Scotland Neck, where he lay some weeks, and his life was despaired of; but through the goodness of God he recovered again. Dawson seemed somewhat affrighted, fearing he would die, and sent a doctor up to attend him. And after Elder Tanner recovered, he never at-

tempted to seek for any recompense, but submitted to it patiently as *persecution* for Christ's sake." (*Middle District Association's Minutes* for 1923, pp. 17 and 18.)

JOHN WEATHERFORD

Now let us look at the other prisoner, John Weatherford, who was arrested along with John Tanner, on May 15, 1773, and who was less fortunate than Elder Tanner for he had a long and bitter experience of prison life, being incarcerated for five long months, in Chesterfield jail. But he was a bright and shining light, accomplishing much for his Master while confined within those prison walls.

JOHN WEATHERFORD

Imprisoned Five Months in Chesterfield County Jail and Had His Hands Slashed as He Extended Them Through the Iron Bars

"John Weatherford was born in Charlotte county, Va., in 1740, and entered the ministry in 1761. Wherever he went crowds attended his ministry. It was a source of wonder that a plain man without any pretensions to learning should so far obtain the confidence of the people. Having reached Chesterfield, preaching the good news of salvation, he was arrested by Col. Cary and thrust into prison. He was confined in jail five months. During his imprisonment he enjoyed much of the Divine presence. His trials only promoted the furtherance of the gospel. His courage never forsook him. He preached at the door of the prison as long as allowed the privilege; when refused that he preached through the grates of the windows. So great was the opposition that an effort was made to put a stop to that also. Soldiers were stationed outside the windows and when in his enthusiasm he extended his hands through the bars they were slashed with swords. These scars he carried to his grave, being remarked upon by those attending his burial. In order to prevent their hearing a brick wall was erected ten or twelve feet high before the prison and the top thereof lined with glass bottles set in mortar to prevent the people from sitting on the top of the wall to hear the Word. Weatherford devised means to overcome this. A

handkerchief was to be raised by the congregation on a pole above the wall, as a signal that the people were ready to hear. His voice being very strong, he could throw it beyond the impediments and convey the words of life and salvation to the listening crowd. Souls were blessed and converted by his preaching. Of those who felt they had experienced the renovating influence of Divine grace, nine wished to follow their Master by being buried in baptism. Elder Christian (Chastain), of Buckingham, came and in the night or perhaps about twilight these persons were buried in baptism." (*Middle District Association's Minutes for 1923*, pp. 16; 17.)

The reader will note from the above that "soldiers" are said to have slashed Weatherford's hands when they were thrust through the iron bars of his cell. As this was the first time "soldiers" have been mentioned in this connection, Rev. R. H. Winfree, the author of this report about Weatherford, in the *Middle District Association's Minutes*, was appealed to and sent the following reply:

"2820 New Kent Ave., Richmond, Va.

Oct. 5, 1932.

"Rev. L. Peyton Little,
Williamsburg, Va.

"Dear Brother Little:

"There are several errors in my report on the preachers imprisoned in Chesterfield Jail. There is a typographical error in regard to the statement that Augustine Eastin was expelled from the church for embracing Americanism. In my manuscript is the word Arianism.

"In regard to soldiers using swords to cut the hands of John Weatherford. I have a copy of the report read at the association & what I said was some base fellows cut his hands with knives as he thrust them thro the bars of the prison window.

"At the next meeting of the association, I called attention to these errors, but I had no way to correct them except to ask that those who had the minutes make a note of these two errors. I never have been able to find out how the sentence about the soldiers got into the report. It is not in my original copy. I was intimately associated with Dr. Hatcher

for a number of years. We visited Chesterfield C. H. to find out from the records all about the imprisonment of the Baptist preachers. There is no record there of the soldiers or any one else cutting his hands with knives or swords.

"Rev. Eleazer Clay—who was the first Baptist minister to be ordained in Chesterfield County, visited the preachers in prison. He often carried them things to eat. He was wealthy & had great influence in the county. He lived to be 92 years of age. He died in 1836. It is said that he often spoke of this incident about John Weatherford. I am glad you are going to prepare a volume on the 'Imprisoned Preachers of Virginia.'

"I wrote a number of letters to different parts of the county to find out about the preachers who were imprisoned in Chesterfield Jail. I suppose that you know that the Middle District Association, erected a granite monument, a memorial to these preachers. It is on the spot where the old Jail stood. Any information that I can furnish you in regard to the preachers imprisoned in Chesterfield Jail, I will gladly do. In your volume you can correct these two errors in my report.

Yours Fraternally,

R. H. Winfree."

Dr. Taylor's sketch of Elder Weatherford contains the following:

"The entrance of Elder W. into the ministry must have occurred about the year 1761. He became at once a zealous and successful herald of the cross. He not only preached in his native county, but traveled much, especially in the southern part of the State. As he was among the earliest Baptist ministers of Virginia, it was his honor to suffer persecution for the sake of Christ. Naturally, he was a man of courage, but it was the promise, 'Lo, I am with you alway,' that enabled him to meet the coming storm. Trusting in the Lord, he feared no evil. Neither stripes nor imprisonment deterred him from the performance of duty. The rulers of the Episcopal Church were much vexed at the success of Mr. W. Whenever he went, his ministry was attended by crowds, and many were converted through his instrumentality. It was a source of great mortification that a plain man, without any pretensions to learning, should so far obtain the confidence of

the people. Various measures were adopted to silence him and his fellow-laborers. But they preferred obedience to God rather than man, even at the expense of liberty and life. Having gone down as far as Chesterfield, preaching the good news of salvation, he was arrested by Col. Cary, and thrown into prison. He was in confinement five months. During his incarceration, he enjoyed much of the Divine presence. And, as it was with the Apostle, his trials only promoted the furtherance of the gospel.

"He continued to exercise a powerful influence in the county. Says the brother who communicated these facts: 'His courage forsook him not. The love of Christ constrained him. He preached at the door of the prison as long as allowed the privilege: when refused that, he preached through the grates of the window. But such determined opposition did he meet, that an effort was made by his enemies to put a stop to that also.'" (Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, First Series (1860), pp. 51 and 53.)

*John Weatherford's Hands Slashed as He Extended
Them Through the Iron Bars of His Cell Window*

This inhuman treatment inflicted upon Weatherford was the occasion of the following interesting incident many years afterwards:

In the *Baptist Argus* of Louisville, Kentucky, of December 20, 1906, there was an interesting account of one of Dr. Wm. E. Hatcher's experiences, under this heading:

THE MARTYR MARKS

"In 1872 the Baptists of Virginia started a movement for the endowment of Richmond College. Great zest and vigor were imparted to the movement by making it a memorial to our Baptist fathers in Virginia who fought the battle for religious liberty, and especially those who were subject to fines, imprisonments and other wrongs because of their steady and unflinching adherence to Baptist faith. Especial Baptist literature was created for the purpose and many Baptist ministers and prominent laymen charged to the muzzle with these heroic histories and all aflame with denominational zeal were sent forth to arouse the people. This

work was undertaken with no thought of compensation, and in not a few cases men freely bore their own expenses. Mass-meetings were held in many cities, whole days were given to these fiery orators at district associations, and in the pulpit of almost every church in the State addresses were made. Those were brave and bouyant days. It was indeed a campaign in favor of Baptist history as well as a plea for higher education.

"Upon me fell the duty of going into many portions of Virginia, sometimes in company with other speakers and quite often alone. Naturally enough many interesting episodes marked this unique and remarkable campaign. The purpose of this paper is to put on record one notable and really thrilling incident.

"On an excessively cold night in December, 1872, I met an engagement to speak in the Baptist church at Chatham, Va. It was only a poor audience that braved the rigors of the night—possibly not more than forty or fifty persons in all. In the historical portion of my address I gave a brief account of that brave old spirit of colonial times, Rev. John Weatherford, whose dauntless spirit and fearless convictions got him into many serious troubles with the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of colonial times. He traveled far and wide in Southside Virginia, and by his fiery eloquence he created great excitement. Scores and hundreds were converted under his preaching, and in many cases he was obliged to administer baptism in the later hours of the night lest the enemies of his faith should pounce upon him and take him to jail.

"For quite a long time Mr. Weatherford was confined in the colonial jail at Chesterfield Courthouse, but neither prison bars nor locks had terror for him. His brethren and admirers flocked on Sunday to the village and thronged the yard of the jail. Their loyalty and their eagerness to hear the Word stirred the heart of the courageous prisoner and he would lift the window and thrust his hands through the bars that he might shake hands with his loyal friends. He would also preach through the window to the assemblage, and often in the ardor of delivery would thrust his hands through the bars in earnest gesture. Men of the baser sort were instigated to stand on either side of the window, and armed with knives would slash his hands in un pitying cruelty until, as it was said, his hands would stream with blood as he

spoke, and sometimes in his gesticulations, forgetful of the wounds, he would scatter his blood on his hearers or on the ground. This story I related somewhat in detail and much to the interest of the appreciative audience.

"When I finished my address I took my seat and a serious silence ensued. Presently a stocky old gentleman with white hair and a strong face came to his feet. I learned afterward that it was Dr. William White, an eminent physician of that community, a pronounced Baptist and an eloquent speaker.

"My neighbors and friends,' said the doctor in tones almost suspicious, 'this visitor has told us strange things tonight, and of my own knowledge I cannot testify that many of the things that he has said are true, for I never heard of them before, but I must at least thank the gentleman for explaining to me one thing which has been a puzzle and confusion to me.

"It may not be known to all of you, though it is a fact, that Mr. John Weatherford, so graphically described by the speaker tonight, settled just eight miles from this place after the Revolutionary War. He was one of God's mightiest men, a preacher of surpassing power and many of the churches in this section of Virginia were founded by his ministry. We are indebted to him in large measure for the strong Baptist sentiment now existing in this and adjacent counties.

"One morning I noticed that my father, dressed with unwonted care, was about to set off for a journey on horseback. When I asked him where he was going he said, with great seriousness, that he was going to attend the funeral of Rev. John Weatherford, one of the greatest preachers he had ever known. To my grateful surprise he consented that I might go with him. I was put astride the horse behind him. My astonishment knew no bounds when I reached the home of the old preacher. Never had I seen such an army of horses, carriages, wagons and other vehicles as fairly covered the earth. When I expressed my amazement at the sight my father told me in accents serious and tender that the people had come from every direction to testify to the worth and honor of the good man.

"After the funeral exercises were concluded we were told that those who desired to do so would be allowed to take a last look at the dead. It was a moment of awe to me, for I had not seen the face of the dead before. I clasped tightly

my father's hand and followed him as the line filed by the coffin. I was barely tall enough to look into the coffin. The hands of the veteran minister lay ungloved upon his breast with palms downward. I noticed the stiff and bloodless look they had and saw white and rigid seams extending across the back of each hand. The fact impressed me at the time, but I kept silence, and a thousand times I dare say I recalled those singular marks on the hands of the dead preacher, but never attempted to explain them. I thank my brother for bringing to me tonight so simple and satisfactory a solution of a perplexity which for full sixty years has troubled my mind. They were the marks of the Lord Jesus—martyr marks of God's hero. Honor to his noble memory and to all who have suffered for the kingdom of God. My attention has not been drawn in any sympathetic way to this movement to place our college at Richmond on a better financial basis, and I cannot say that I have been disposed, as perhaps I ought to be, to back this undertaking in a substantial manner. But this memorial feature goes to my heart. Our illustrious old father Weatherford sleeps this winter night in a neglected grave—no granite shaft nor marble slab, nor enclosure, not even a flower pays tribute to the memory of this good man. He not only suffered for us, and for the principles which we cherish, but it was his tears, and blood which gave us our place and prominence in Virginia tonight. If by my modest gift, a gift which must be small—for cruel war has lately ravished me of my substance—I can do aught to honor the martyr spirit of John Weatherford and his co-laborers, I will account it a happy and honorable privilege to do so.'

"Before taking his seat the venerable doctor, who had set flame to every heart by his unconscious eloquence, named a sum that he would give to the memorial movement, so unexpectedly generous that it called forth speedy and unusual responses. It was a night of noble giving, and it was agreed that the noblest gift of all the year was made by the Baptist flock of Chatham."

Anxious to give a definite reference for this statement of Dr. Hatcher's, the author wrote to his son, Rev. Eldridge B. Hatcher, D. D., for any help that he might be able to give and particularly

so because Dr. Eldridge Hatcher had quoted a part of the story in an article in the *Religious Herald* of July 16, 1925. He replied as follows:

“BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE
Eldridge B. Hatcher
Department of Bible
Blue Mountain, Miss.

“Dear Brother Little:

August 29, 1932.

“I am very sorry that I can not give you any information as to the source of my father’s information regarding the cutting of John Weatherford’s hands which, as he preached in the jail, he thrust through the bars and which were cut by outsiders. I heard him too tell the story but never heard him mention where he got the story from. I do not remember seeing any mention of it in history, but the source, whether oral or printed, would seem to have been authoritative in view of the incident at Chatham.”

In a letter of Rev. L. A. Alderson, in the *Religious Herald*, January 12, 1871, he gives this intimate and touching incident in connection with John Weatherford’s imprisonment and release in Chesterfield:

Patrick Henry Befriends John Weatherford

“Several years ago, standing by the grave of Patrick Henry, in company with John Henry, the youngest son, Mr. Henry informed me that while Elder John Weatherford was in Chesterfield jail, in 1773, he learned that, on the other side of James river, there was a lawyer who had become distinguished as the friend of persecuted Baptists. He secured a messenger, and, by him sent £5 in gold—all the money he could raise—with the request that this lawyer would appear at the next term in his defence. Patrick Henry did appear, and having secured his release, returned him the £5, wrapped up in the same handkerchief, just as it had been sent him.”

Dr. Taylor’s sketch of John Weatherford states that it was:

“By the kindness of Patrick Henry (of whom he never spoke but with a glow of affection) he obtained the prison bounds, and by his further aid, was ultimately liberated.”
(Taylor’s *Lives Virginia Baptist Ministers*, Vol. I, p. 53.)

When the Middle District Association met at Weatherford Memorial Baptist Church, in Manchester, Virginia, the Hon. W. W. Baker in a historical sketch of Rev. John Weatherford, prepared at the request of the Association gives this additional information:

"An incident of the times was afterwards related by Bro. Weatherford. That through the influence of Patrick Henry he was allowed the privilege of the prison bounds. Mr. Henry also secured an order for his release, but the jailer refused to release him until the jail fees were paid, which from the length of imprisonment, were a considerable sum. He was therefore forced to remain in prison. Not long afterwards he was informed that some one, whose name was concealed, had paid the charges, and he was set at liberty. With a thankful heart he walked out of prison. More than twenty years afterwards, upon the removal of Mr. Henry to Charlotte county, he became a neighbor of Bro. Weatherford, who was then pastor of a church near by, and in recounting their early experiences in the struggle for civil and religious liberty, Bro. Weatherford learned for the first time that Mr. Henry had paid his fine, and always afterwards spoke of Mr. Henry with a glow of affection."

When Elder Weatherford was "allowed the privilege of the prison bounds" he was very grateful and may have felt like Lord Byron's *Prisoner of Chillon*, when he said:

"A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe."

But when, after a lapse of twenty years, he found out why he was granted certain privileges and finally given his liberty, there is no wonder that he always spoke of Patrick Henry "with a glow of affection."

Sample's *History*, 1810 edition, says on page 24, that it was while the Baptists were endeavoring to secure licensed places for preaching that "they were so fortunate as to interest in their behalf, the celebrated Patrick Henry: being always the friend of liberty, he only needed to be informed of their oppression: with-

out hesitation, he stepped forward to their relief. From that time, until the day of their complete emancipation, from the shackles of tyranny, the Baptists found in Patrick Henry, an unwavering friend. May his name descend to posterity with unsullied honour!" In passing it should be said that Mr. Henry not only defended imprisoned Baptist preachers, but assisted the Baptists in securing licensed places for preaching, and in getting a law passed which permitted them to marry members of their own flocks and to bury their own dead.

In Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, 1860 edition, Series I, pages 53 and 54, is an account of John Weatherford's closing days:

"In 1813, he removed to the County of Halifax, and in 1823 to Pittsylvania, where he closed his days. For several years before his death, he became too infirm to travel far from home, but frequently preached in his own neighborhood. His interest in Divine things never diminished. The great truths on which, during a long ministry, he delighted to dwell, were still the joy of his heart. During his last sickness, he frequently referred to the astonishing love of God to poor sinners. Every day he requested the beautiful lines of Newton to be sung:

"'Amazing grace, how sweet the sound.' etc.

"Those present would be called to his bedside, that he might speak to them of the loving kindness of the Lord. Sometimes he would shout the Divine praises aloud. His faith, to the last, was unwavering. He died at the house of Mr. Nowlen, on the 23d of January, 1833, being more than ninety years of age.

"This venerable servant of Jesus Christ was distinguished for the length of time he was employed in his Master's cause. Between seventy and eighty years did he preach a crucified Saviour, and recommend him to the lost and guilty. He was willing to suffer, and did suffer much, for the sake of Christ."

This Mr. Nowlen, at whose home Elder Weatherford died, lived in the vicinity of Shockoe Church, situated in Pittsylvania County near the line of the Richmond and Danville Railroad, and the tomb of Weatherford is half mile distant from this meeting-house.

In the *Religious Herald* of July 13, 1916, is the following brief notice about Weatherford's grave:

"Rev. G. C. Duncan, of Carrsville, writes in reference to a matter recently mentioned in the *Herald*: 'If my memory serves me, I have seen John Weatherford's grave. It isn't immediately at any church, nor in a churchyard, but in an old family burying-ground not far from Riceville church. I think Brother S. R. Stone, of Riceville, can tell you about it. Wasn't a monument erected to the memory of Rev. John Weatherford some years ago by the Baptists of Pittsylvania county?'

"'Let Brother Stone or some one else give us briefly the facts'."



JOHN WEATHERFORD'S GRAVE

Two weeks later, July 27, 1916, the *Herald* contained the following information from Dr. William Hedley:

"JOHN WEATHERFORD'S GRAVE

"The Roanoke Association met in 1903 at Shockoe church, Pittsylvania county. Dr. W. H. Whitsitt was present at the session. He ferreted out the grave of John Weatherford, which is about a quarter of a mile from the church. He suggested that as the original tomb-stone was fallen down and

broken that a new one be erected. The Association appointed a committee to make recommendations at the next meeting of the body.

"Great bodies move slowly, and it was not until December 6, 1906, that the committee finished its work. There was a difficulty in absolutely identifying the grave, as the broken stone had fallen across two graves; one of these was John Weatherford's, but which one it was impossible to ascertain.

"A stone was erected in the church-yard at Shockoe. On the stone is a statement explaining that John Weatherford is buried in a field in the vicinity. This rather unusual procedure was adopted because it was felt that no one would ever see the stone if it were erected in an isolated field, and that few would know that the dust of a Baptist hero lay in the neighborhood, unless the stone were erected in a conspicuous place.

"Rev. R. E. L. Aylor, now of Harmony Grove, unveiled the monument, and spoke on 'The Life and Times of John Weatherford,' while the undersigned made an address on 'The Baptists and Religious Liberty.'

Yours fraternally,

William Hedley."

Another statement concerning the grave and monument of John Weatherford is found in an article by Rev. R. W. Grizzard, of Chatham, Virginia, in the *Religious Herald* of June 7, 1928:

REV. JOHN WEATHERFORD'S GRAVE

"In an old and sadly neglected grave yard in Pittsylvania county, Va., near the post office, Java, reposes the honored dust of Rev. John Weatherford, a sufferer for conscience sake. Elder Weatherford's last resting place is known as the Owen burying ground. This ancient necropolis has fallen into disuse, and it is said that a quarter of a century has elapsed since a burial has been made in it.

"The grave of the heroic old time minister is located half a mile back of Shockoe Baptist church, at the foot of White Oak Mountain, and is marked by a heavy, flat marble about five feet high and broken in two in the middle. Quoting from the Historical Sketch of Shockoe Baptist church, read at the centennial celebration of the founding of the church, November 29, 1903, by Mr. Joseph B. Anderson, a leading

Baptist layman of Danville, we find this statement: 'One fact I desire to have correctly known. To this church belongs the credit of the movement to erect a stone over the grave of John Weatherford, which lies within a few hundred yards of this church. The suggestion came from Elias Dodson, of blessed memory. * * * John W. Fitzgerald and James McDowell were appointed in July 1879, to ascertain cost of stone. The stone was erected shortly thereafter, the inscription being written, I think, by Dr. A. B. Brown. * * *'

"In 1906 a monument to the memory of Weatherford was erected by the Roanoke (now Pittsylvania) Baptist Association. This monument, though not specially of imposing appearance, is yet quite deserving and befitting the memory of the courageous preacher. It stands in a section of the Shockoe church yard, close by tombstones marking other graves.

"The inscriptions of the four sides of this monument are:

" 'Elder John Weatherford, Baptist Minister. Born In Charlotte County 1740. Lay In Jail In Chesterfield Coun-

ty in 1773 Five Months For Preaching. Moved to Halifax in 1813; To Pittsylvania In 1823; Died January 23, 1833.

" 'Erected in 1906 by Churches of the Roanoke Association.

" 'A Sufferer for Conscience Sake.

" 'An Earnest and Faithful Minister of the Gospel.'

"An inscription on the stone that marks his grave says:

" 'He Began to Preach in 1764'."

"Loneliness and deep silence reign supreme around his last low resting place. The dead trunk of a giant cherry tree, whose roots must have certainly penetrated the mold of the man of God, stands near the head of the grave. Pine, cedar and Walnut trees stand sentinel-like round about and seem to be whispering dirges as the wind sways their branches.

Periwinkle trails graceful wreaths all over and around Elder Weatherford's grave. An untenanted house, long deserted and fast going to decay, stands within a stone's throw of the grave, and the March wind swaying its creaking doors and slamming the window shutters of the ancient homestead, makes ghostly sounds, even in broad daylight.

"Weatherford, along with William Webber, Joseph Anthony, Augustine Eastin, John Tanner, Jeremiah Walker, and David Tinsley, were Baptist preachers confined in Chesterfield county jail for preaching. Some were whipped by individuals and several fined.

"Glorious martyrs these!

"The necessity for religious freedom in the face of such monstrous intolerance and proscription in matters of conscience and religion, waxed valiant and marked the coming of dawn of an early day when such inquisition would be impossible in our country—the refuge of the free. Bless God for the stalwarts in the faith into whose labors we have come!

"Loyal soldiers of long ago,
May we who toil here below
Keep faith with conscience truth and God,
As you did, when the earth you trod.

"What though the martyr's crown be worn,
And tender flesh be pierced by thorn;
He who died on Calvary's cross
Counted it gain rather than loss.

"And in our Father's home on high,
In the sweet endless by and by,
There are crowns of endless life
Beyond this world and worldly strife.

Chatham, Va.

R. W. Grizzard."

The above article was the occasion of the following editorial by Dr. R. H. Pitt, in the same issue of the *Religious Herald*. After reciting some of Weatherford's prison experiences Dr. Pitt continues:

WHO WAS WEATHERFORD?

"Perhaps our readers would like to know a little more of the history of this faithful minister of the olden times. His imprisonment occurred in the year 1773, when he was just

thirty-three years old. Upon his liberation he began at once his active ministry, mostly as an evangelist. Near the close of the eighteenth century he became pastor of churches in Charlotte and Campbell county. In 1813 he removed to the county of Halifax, remaining there ten years and removing in 1823 to Pittsylvania, where he spent the remainder of his life. He died at the house of a Mr. Nowlen on the 23d of January, 1833, being then more than ninety years of age.

"He was the last survivor of all that group of Baptist preachers who suffered imprisonment in the State for



MONUMENT TO JOHN WEATHERFORD
IN SHOCKOE CHURCHYARD

preaching the gospel. The biography of him in Taylor's *Baptist Ministers*, First Series, says: 'Between seventy and eighty years did he preach a crucified Saviour and recommend Him to the lost and guilty. He was willing to suffer, and did suffer, much for the sake of Christ. His temporal circumstances were far from being comfortable. With a large family, having had fifteen children, twelve of whom were daughters, he often found it difficult to obtain for them the necessities of life. He is another of those painful instances of laborious effort in preaching the gospel without receiving a competent support.' As a result of this failure on the part of his people to give him a competency, a failure

by the way not at all limited to that time and place, he was often compelled to labor on his farm in order to provide for his family. A very interesting story is told of his generosity of heart. He possessed it is said, the softness of a little child. A neighbor who was embarrassed with debt, and his wagon and team, his main support, were stopped by the sheriff. Weatherford had no confidence in the man, but had great sympathy for his family and so became bail for the distressed farmer. The farmer failed to fulfill his engagements and under the law Weatherford's only horse was taken and he ordered to produce it on the day of sale. He did so, knowing that his crop must be lost if his horse was sold. On his arrival Colonel Watkins, a county man, but not a neighbor, who was acquainted with the circumstances, addressed the company, saying: 'Gentlemen, this worthy and industrious minister must not lose his horse by the treachery of one whom he relieved. We should not suffer it. Come to this table and show your sympathy for suffering innocence.' So saying he put down a five dollar bill on the table and called on the company to follow. The amount was soon made up and Mr. Weatherford rode home and finished his crop.

* * * * *

"All these reflections and remembrances are called to mind by the interesting letter from our friend, Pastor R. W. Grizzard, of Halifax, which we print elsewhere in this issue. It may be that the little pictures of Weatherford's grave in the woods and of the simple cenotaph which stands in Shockoe churchyard and the interesting story of these by Brother Grizzard may awaken interest on the part of our readers and may lead them to acquaint themselves a little more fully with the heroic period of our Virginia Baptist history. It would be well indeed if acquaintance with this history led them to cherish and appreciate more intelligently and earnestly the great principles for which these men in that far off day risked their comfort and their liberty. Surely Baptist folk must be constantly on the alert to prevent invasion or violation of these principles by others and equally alert themselves to preserve and cherish them."

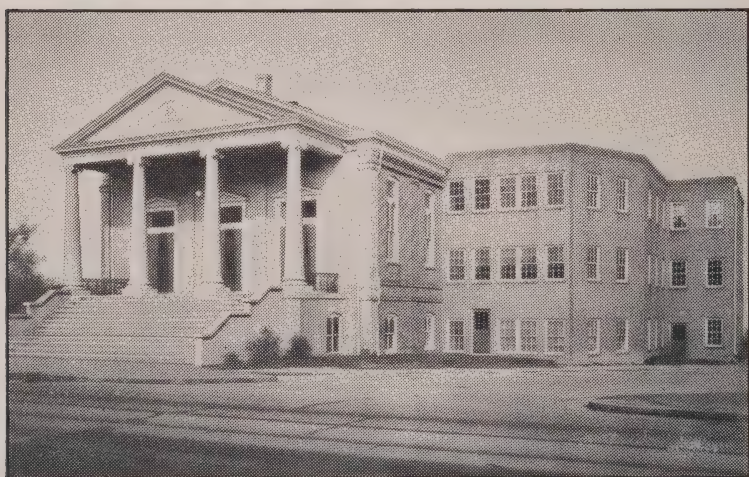
The large and progressive Weatherford Memorial Baptist Church, in Richmond, is a worthy memorial to this old hero. This church now (1937) has a church enrollment of 941, and Dr. J. Levering Evans is the pastor.

High Brick Wall Around the Chesterfield Jail

Sometimes the burning of matches and pepper-pods at the prison doors was resorted to, thus preventing their preaching with the nauseous, suffocating smoke; sometimes half-drunken strolls would be employed to beat a drum around the prison to prevent the people from hearing; sometimes when the preacher was proclaiming a message of love to dying men, the persecuting element of society would ride up in a gallop among their hearers until persons of respectability have been seen under the horses' feet; sometimes the people would be threatened with dire calamities if they came there again to hear preaching, and sometimes the poor negroes who attended these services would be severely whipped. But now in Chesterfield trial is made of an entirely different scheme:

According to Dr. Semple's *History* (1810), page 20:

"The zealots of the old order were greatly embarrassed: 'If, say they, we permit them to go on, our Church must come to nothing, and yet if we punish them, as far as we can stretch the law, it seems not to deter them; for they preach through prison windows, in spite of our endeavors to prevent it'."



WEATHERFORD MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

So determined were the authorities to prevent these preachers in Chesterfield jail from preaching that they went to the expense of building an obstruction of some kind between the jail and the hearers on the outside. All the references thus far consulted agree that a wall, or fence, was built around the Chesterfield jail to prevent the people from hearing the imprisoned preachers when they preached through "the grates," but there is a division of opinion among them as to the material out of which it was constructed. Several authors state that it was of "brick," while only one mentions "a close plank fence"; and while all who mention the "brick wall" are writers of that day the one who mentions "a plank fence" lived in recent times. The preponderance of evidence is therefore in favor of the "brick" wall.

Dr. Taylor's notice from which we first quoted simply states that:

"For this purpose they built an outer wall, or fence, above the grates."

Another writer has this to say on the subject:

"In some cases drums were beaten in the time of service; high enclosures were erected before the prison windows by malicious opponents." (Benedict's *A History of the Baptist Denomination of America*, p. 655.)

In Dr. Taylor's *Walter Ennis*, which is historical fiction, he refers to this effort on the part of the authorities, on page 426:

"Colonel Cary was so incensed that he used every expedient in his power to prevent it. He even hired bricklayers to build a high wall around the jail so that the people could not approach the prison."

Then in a footnote that refers to this statement he explains that it is "Historical. Is stated in history of Kehukee Association," and by referring to this *History*, published in 1803, the following statement may be found on page 264:

"In the county of Chesterfield several Baptist ministers were imprisoned for preaching in that county; and the people were so desirous to hear preaching that they would attend

at the prison, and the ministers would preach to them through the grates of the prison. And in order to prevent their hearing, Colonel Cary had a brick wall erected 10 or 12 feet high before the prison, and the top thereof fixed with glass bottles set in mortar, to prevent the people from sitting on the top of the wall to hear the word. But if persecutors did but know it, they take a wrong step to prevent the progress of religion by persecution: For persecution always whets the edge of *devotion*."

Morgan Edwards who gathered his material thirty-one years before the history referred to above was printed, and in fact while these preachers were being incarcerated in the jails of Virginia, has this to say about the wall around the Chesterfield gaol:

"The said Mr. Easting was in Chesterfield goal the 15th of May last. When our ministers were in this prison before they preached through the bars. But now Col. C—— hath surrounded the prison with a high wall in order to prevent it." (Edward's *Volumes*, pp. 38, 39.)

Continuing the paragraph already referred to in Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, Vol. I, page 52, we are told that even this determined effort did not stop these imprisoned preachers from preaching, or prevent the congregation from hearing the gospel, for:

"Weatherford devised means to overcome the obstacle. A handkerchief, by the congregation, was to be raised on a pole, above the wall, as a signal that the people were ready to hear. His voice being very strong, he could throw it beyond these impediments, and convey the words of life and salvation to the listening crowd."

The only author who says the wall was a "high plank fence" is the late Dr. Geo. W. Beale of Hague, Virginia, who in an article in the *Religious Herald* (Richmond), June 8, 1899, under the heading, "Baptist Beginnings in Virginia," makes the following statement:

"When the malice of their enemies had erected a close, high plank fence in front of the jail windows to prevent the imprisoned preachers from exhorting the crowd without, a

handkerchief displayed on a pole above the screen became the signal from the waiting people that they were ready to hear, when the stalwart voice of one of the prisoners would send the truth home through the boards to the hearts of the listening company."

If, as one authority states, the top of the wall was "fixed with glass bottles set in mortar to prevent the people from sitting on the top of the wall to hear the word," one wonders how that could have been done on a plank fence.

CONVERSIONS

Made in Chesterfield When the Preachers Preached Through the Iron Grates

Reference has already been made to the valuable acquisition of Elder Eleazer Clay to the Baptist ranks. One of the converts of the preachers who were confined in Chesterfield gaol was made the instrument of awakening him to the value of eternal things. Elder Clay immediately identified himself with the Baptists in spite of the fact that the authorities held them in contempt, though he was in prosperous worldly circumstances and possessing much influence in society. He must have been, as we have seen, the one minister in Chesterfield County who was reputed to be "worth one hundred thousand dollars." Notwithstanding his wealth and social position he entered, we are told, with boldness upon Christian work in Chesterfield County, and "although others were thrown into prison and in various ways shamefully abused, he did not suffer by the hands of violence. He was a man of dauntless spirit, and the opposers feared to maltreat him."

Nine Candidates for Baptism Await an Administrator of the Ordinance

In Dr. Taylor's account of John Weatherford, already quoted, he says:

"Before his release, some souls were blessed, and he was owned as the honored instrument in their conversion. During this imprisonment a circumstance occurred, which we beg leave to record. Of those who felt that they had expe-

rienced the renovating influence of Divine grace, nine wished to follow their Master, by being *buried* in baptism. He sent to his native county for Elder Williams to come down to perform the ordinance."

This invitation of Elder Weatherford was either conveyed by Elder Clay, or voluntarily abetted by him, as a letter written at this time will prove:

"Chesterfield, July 21, 1773.

"Dear Brother Williams:

"I have long looked for you to come down to see us and the prisoners. We would be glad to see you soon, for we wish you to baptize these that are now waiting for an opportunity. The Lord is carrying on a glorious work in our county, especially below the Court-house. Let Brother Watkin know that the Lord has not passed by Mrs. F., but, as some believe, has placed her name in the Lamb's book of life. The preaching at the prison is not attended in vain, for we hope that several are savingly converted, while others are under great distress, and are made to cry out, 'what shall we do to be saved.' Time fails me this opportunity to tell all. The brethren daily look for you to come down; they talk much about you. Remember me to all the Christian Brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen.

Yours, in Christ,

Eleazer Clay."

Elder John Williams was a bright and shining light in his day. He was frequently chosen as the clerk of the Southern District Association, and during this very year, in which the above request was made for him to come to Chesterfield and baptize the candidates, he reported more additions to his church, the Meherrin, than any other church was reported as receiving in the whole Association. But Elder Williams "shrank from the dangerous undertaking," we are told. Perhaps he thought, that discretion was the better part of valor. Or, he may have felt like Nehemiah, that he, too, was doing a great work and could not come down. Or, he may have been one of those who thought it prudent to secure a licensed place for preaching and then adhere to that, as his journal would indicate. Whatever the excuse may have been

it is known that he did not go, and Weatherford then "remembered that Elder Chastain, of Buckingham, was, as the thought, of a *truer* stamp, and sent for him. He came, and in the night, or perhaps about twilight these persons were baptized." We are told that when Elder Chastain arrived he "was ordered, on pain of imprisonment, to leave the county. Having refused, he gave notice he should preach at an arbor in that neighborhood. On the day appointed he attended, and having risen, a man with a bottle of rum appeared, and commanded him to come down and take a dram, or he would horsewhip him. Mr. C. replied, "I do not wish to drink, and as I am not generally tedious you shall not be long detained." His gentleness of manner subdued the lion spirit before him, and he proceeded with great pungency to preach the truth. He afterwards said, "I felt perfectly willing to receive stripes for his sake, who was so willingly stricken for me." (Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, Vol. I, p. 207.)

Another case illustrating the fruitfulness of that ministry which was performed with shackled hands and immured bodies, is that of William Hickman. In his sketch of him Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), page 239, quotes Mr. Hickman as saying:

"Curiosity led me to go some distance to hear these babblers. The two precious men were John Waller and James Childs. When I got to the meeting I could not get sight of the preachers, there was such a multitude of people. God's power attended the Word, and numbers cried out for mercy. I went home heavy-hearted, knowing myself to be in a wretched state. I informed my wife what I had seen and heard. She was much disgusted for fear I would be dipped too. She begged I would not go again, but I told her I must go and see them dipped. I went the next day; and an awful day it was to me. One of the ministers preached before baptism, and then moved on to the water, nearly a quarter of a mile. The people moved in solemn procession, singing. Many tears were dropped, and not a few from my own eyes."

In the memoir by Dr. Taylor the above paragraph is given second, but in point of time, it must have been first, because the

preceding statement says that he was converted while the gospel was being preached from the jail windows of Chesterfield:

“He (William Hickman) professed religion during those seasons of ecclesiastical violence when devoted and useful ministers of the gospel were seized and immured within the walls of prisons, and by various other methods most cruelly persecuted. The whole of eastern Virginia at that period presented a spectacle of almost universal suffering among the despised Baptists. But the Word of God grew and multiplied. In the County of Chesterfield, while several ministers were preaching from the windows of the jail, scores were converted to God, among whom were many who afterwards stood up as public witnesses of the truth; of this number was William Hickman.”

Rev. L. A. Alderson writing an open letter from Atchison, Kansas, to Rev. Geo. B. Taylor, in the *Religious Herald*, January 12, 1871, says:

“When Elder Chadoin was about ninety years of age, he informed the writer that he witnessed the baptism, in James river, by Rane Chastain, of the nine candidates who had professed faith under the preaching of Wm. Webber and Jos. Anthony, while they were prisoners in Chesterfield, during the winter of 1770-1771. I felt a good deal of interest in becoming acquainted with one of these candidates as the wife of ‘Walter Ennis’.”

Dr. Taylor’s account states that it was John Weatherford who sent for Rane Chastain and that it was while he—Weatherford—was in jail during the year 1773 that “nine candidates” desired baptism. It is probable that either Rev. L. A. Alderson or the nonagenarian whom he quotes had confounded the two events and attributed to Webber and Anthony that which rightfully belonged to Weatherford. Webber and Anthony were in jail during the winter of 1770-1771, as the above quotation states, but the letter to Elder Williams is dated July 21, 1773.

JEREMIAH WALKER

About three months after Weatherford and Tanner were thrown into jail the Chesterfield authorities laid their hands upon

another Baptist preacher—Jeremiah Walker—and endeavored to silence him.

JEREMIAH WALKER

*Imprisoned in Chesterfield County Jail; Duration
of His Imprisonment Unknown*

From the court records we learn that Walker's imprisonment occurred in 1773, and that the magistrate who issued the warrant for his apprehension, was Col. Archibald Cary, the same man who had Weatherford and Tanner arrested.

Elder Walker was tried before seven "Gentlemen Justices," on August 6, 1773. The Chesterfield County Order Book, Number 5, page 306, contains the following record:

"At a court held for Chesterfield County August 6, 1773.

"Present	Archibald Cary
John Archer	Francis Goode
Joseph Bass	John Archer Junr
Robert Goode	John Bott

Gentleman Justices.

"Jeremiah Walker who was committed by a Warrant issued by Archibald Cary Gentleman for sundry misdemeanors being at the Barr and acknowledging that he had convened the people in this County and preached to them not being a minister of the Church of England within Six months last past the Court being of Opinion that Such Behavior is a Breach of the peace and of Good Behavior do order that the said Jeremiah be committed to the Goal of this County til he enter into Recognizance himself in penalty of £50, with To Sureties in penalty of £25 each for his keeping the peace and being of good Behavior for the space of one year nex ensuing."

A check shows that five of the same Justices who tried Jeremiah Walker had also tried Weatherford and Tanner. Weatherford and Walker figured in an incident which proves that a deeply entrenched evil is not easily routed, and that ill-gotten, or self-assumed power, is relinquished with great reluctance. The animosity of the persecutors of our Baptist preachers,

as well as the determination of the civil powers to exercise what authority they possessed in suppressing these heretical Baptists, are illustrated again and again. A specific case of the acrimonious action may be found in the ruling of the Chesterfield Justices, on September 3, 1773, with reference to these two men. Three "Gentlemen Justices," viz., Abram Salle, Francis Goode and Robert Goode comprised the court, and what they did is embalmed in the court records, Order Book, Number 5, pages 320 and 322:

JEREMIAH WALKER AND JOHN WEATHERFORD

*Denied the Prison Bounds and Placed in Close
Confinement*

"The court being informed that Jeremiah Walker and John Weatherfoot who were by order of another Court committed to Goal til they give surety for keeping the peace and being of good Behavior under certain penalties therein mentioned having been admitted to the liberty of the prison rules and the Court being of opinion that they have not a right to such enlargement do order the Sheriff to recommit the said prisoners til they comply with said former order of this Court."

It is known that John Weatherford remained in jail five months, but the duration of Jeremiah Walker's confinement has not been handed down. But Mr. Walker's "patience, humility, and uniform prudence and piety, while in prison, acquired for him the esteem of all, whose prejudices would allow them to think favourably of a Baptist. He kept a journal or diary, when confined, in which are some of the most pious and sensible reflections." (Benedict's *History*, Volume II, page 389.)

It is difficult to reconcile the last statement in the following quotation as to the manner of Elder Walker's release, with the long confinement of John Weatherford and Patrick Henry's part in his liberation, but we give it as it appears in the *History of the Kehukee Association*, on pages 264 and 265:

"Col. Cary and others in Chesterfield argued that the act of *toleration*, in the statute of William and Mary, did not extend to the colony of Virginia. But Elder Jeremiah Walker, a Baptist minister, was imprisoned for preaching in that

county, and he was permitted to plead in his own defence; and after he had pleaded his own cause, and explained the act of *toleration* before the court in Chesterfield, they allowed his arguments were conclusive; and so discharged the prisoners."

Jeremiah Walker came into Virginia under peculiar circumstances, but it was not long before he had won a high place among his brethren. Let us look back some five years before Walker's imprisonment. A consecrated layman, Mr. Samuel Thompson, who lived in Amelia County, (now Nottoway), was the human instrument by which "some of his neighbors obtained a hope of eternal life."

NOTTOWAY CHURCH

*Established Through the Instrumentality of a
Consecrated Layman—Samuel Thompson*

When these new converts heard that there were those in Pittsylvania County who believed and taught those doctrines that were so precious to them, "they traveled off to look for them. This took place about 1768."

They procured the attendance of two preachers, Samuel Harriss and Jeremiah Walker. We are told that the speech and preaching of these two servants of the living God, "was in demonstration of the Spirit and Power." A great work broke out in those parts; insomuch that a church, which they called Nottoway, was constituted in 1769, "which may be said to be the mother church of all others for many miles in circumference." Elder Jeremiah Walker was induced to remove from North Carolina and take the pastoral care of the church. He sustained this relationship for some fifteen years, from 1769 to 1784. "Few men in so short a time did more good than Walker did round about Nottoway. Besides his labors in the adjacent neighborhoods, by which many churches were planted, his success in this church was very extensive. Within about two years from its constitution they rendered and account of 260 members to the Association, and it was the largest church in Virginia; and two years after that, when several others had been taken off, their number was 196." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 201.)

While pastor of Nottoway church Elder Jeremiah Walker "became very conspicuous, and disseminated his evangelical principles far and near. He was almost incessantly employed in preaching the gospel. In a few years, aided by others, particularly certain young preachers of his own raising, he planted between twenty and thirty churches south of James river. In these were also a considerable number of gifted characters, who afterwards became distinguished preachers. All of whom were either brought to the knowledge of the truth through his ministry, or were nurtured under his fostering hand, after they were brought. * * * Mr. Walker had a principal hand in drafting for the Baptists their petitions and remonstrances to the Virginia Assembly; he also took an active and successful part in supporting them in the House, where he gained the applause of the candid members, as a man of sense and address." (Benedict's *History*, Vol. II, pp. 390-392.)

"So distinguished a man among the despised Baptists," says Benedict's *History*, Volume II, page 389, "could not long escape the notice of their opponents. When persecution began to arise, the enemies of the cross soon cast their eyes on Jeremiah Walker. Him they view as the champion. 'If we can but silence him,' said they, 'the whole host beside will hide themselves in dens and caverns.' Accordingly he was arrested in Chesterfield county, by virtue of a warrant from a magistrate, and, after examination was committed to jail."

Dr. Semple thus describes Elder Walker's manner of address, on page 82 of his work:

"His manners in private companies, were exceedingly attaching. Gentle, affable, polite; cheerful yet grave, familiar yet dignified; he was, in a word, every thing that could encourage the backward, or soothe the irritable. His conversation was sensible, and judiciously adapted, to those with whom he was conversing. He was by no means urgent or positive, in supporting his opinions, but would ply his competitor with strong arguments, as if they were pearls thrown before him, which he might gather up as his own, or leave them; and it is probable, few men could make gewgaws look more like jewels, than Jeremiah Walker; his was a sweet-

ened dose. In the pulpit, although Walker possessed but little rhetorical fire (at least in his last days), yet he was singularly entertaining. When Walker preached, there were few listless hearers."

This, then, is the kind of man the Chesterfield authorities put into prison for preaching the Gospel.

"When Mr. Walker came out of jail, he stood, if possible, in higher estimation than he had done before. Whereever he went to preach, he was attended by a large concourse. And from his preaching, the most beneficial consequences were constantly produced.

* * * * *

"Mr. Walker had arrived to a degree of distinction, far above any of his associates. In whatever direction he might travel, he was hailed by many as father in the gospel. Caressed by his friends; admired by all, even his enemies; invited to the society of the great; very influential, and, indeed all powerful in associations and other places among the Baptists." (Semple's *History* (1810), pp. 387-388.)

But "high delights are fraught with great dangers"; and "in every good, there will be some evil." He continued as a flaming evangel for a number of years, but a footnote in Beale's *Semple* (1894), page 28, tells us that, "Later in life he fell into immorality and adopted erroneous views of doctrine, which cast a blemish on his character and impaired his usefulness."

He moved to Georgia in 1784, and Jesse Mercer's *A History of the Georgia Baptist Association* states that Jeremiah Walker was present at this Association in 1786 as the Clerk of a church called Fishing Creek. And then Mr. Mercer gives on pages 24-26 of the above named work this account of that dark and much to be deplored chapter in Jeremiah Walker's life:

"We have already seen that the Rev. Jeremiah Walker had emigrated from Virginia, and become a member of this Association. Mr. W. had been a famous champion for the truth in Virginia. He had vindicated the doctrine of free and sovereign grace against the Arminian notions of free will and self-righteousness. He was bold and resolute in the

defence of religious liberty against the intolerant measures of the established clergy. For this he was shamefully treated and imprisoned. But he endured all for Christ's sake, not counting even his own life dear unto him, and came off in the end, more than a conqueror through Him of whose cause he was the fearless and uncompromising advocate. But, strange to tell! after all this, this same man yielded to temptation, and by transgression fell, *shamefully fell*, from his steadfastness and sunk into disgrace!

"Overwhelmed with a sense of guilt, he left Virginia and sought a refuge among strangers, in a strange land; but shame and conviction followed him; and after a short time he returned to his aggrieved and offended brethren (1791), made an humble confession, and besought them to forgive and restore him to their fellowship. His plea was heard and he was restored. Thus reinstated he returned to Georgia, sought and obtained a union and fellowship with the brethren here; and from his self-loathing and deep humility, his burning zeal and powerful talents, he acquired again, a considerable estimation among the churches. But now he adopted the Arminian scheme of doctrine, and began to build up the things he had in his better days attempted to destroy; thereby making himself in the estimate of the Apostle Paul, a transgressor.

"This change of sentiment was probably the result of a defiled conscience, together with mortified pride; motives, too, derived from the same corrupt source, might have induced him, to bring the whole force of his mighty genius, and the power of the weightiest arguments he could produce, to bear upon his newly adopted and beloved system of doctrines. He was soon joined by several others. These were Matthew Talbot, Nathaniel Hall of S. C., and David Tinsley. Mr. T. was his ablest ally."

Rev. James Mathews writing to a friend bore testimony just before his death to the powerful influence that Jeremiah Walker had over him:

"My life is just gone—but had I a thousand lives and ten thousand tongues, I would willingly spend them all in the *delightful* work; in preaching the same doctrines and in the *same* denomination—I say the same doctrine—for *once*, the great Jeremiah Walker had well nigh led me to embrace

the *Arminian* sentiments. Had it not been for my experience, the works of Providence and grace, more especially the character and goodness of God, I should have embraced those delusive errors."

In *The Baptist Encyclopaedia*, by William Cathcart (1881), Volume II, page 1,202, this biographical sketch may be found:

"Walker, Rev. Jeremiah, was born in Bute Co., N. C., about 1747. In early life he was called into the peace of Christ and baptized. He possessed extra-ordinary talents as a thinker and as a speaker, and he soon became a great teacher. In 1769 he took charge of the Nottoway church, Va., and in a few years assisted by brethren called to the Saviour and introduced into the ministry through his instrumentality, he established between twenty and thirty churches south of the James River. He was a natural orator, an exemplary Christian, and a magnet to attract the love of men. He was a burning and a shining light. He was incarcerated in Chesterfield jail for preaching without lawful authority, and released with additional popularity. His ministry had enjoyed the divine favor in a remarkable measure, and its fruits were conspicuous all over Virginia. He was tempted and fell into immorality and after some years of Christian conduct he relapsed from purity again. On repenting of his evil ways he embraced Arminian doctrines, and advocated them even to the extent of schism among his brethren. He was a great, and for many years a good man, and then a wreck in morals and in doctrines. He died Nov. 20, 1792, a forgiven sinner."

Doctor Semple gives the date of his death as September 20, 1792, while the above sketch names November 20, 1792. It is said that, "In his last illness, he endured, with remarkable fortitude and christian resignation, the most excruciating and acute Suffering." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 389.)

Elder Walker is supposed to have been buried in Elbert County, Georgia, where he was pastor, but where his remains rest, or whether the grave is marked in any way, are matters this writer has been unable to find out—although many letters have been written and numerous inquiries made with that end in view.

CULPEPER COUNTY

County Seat—Culpeper

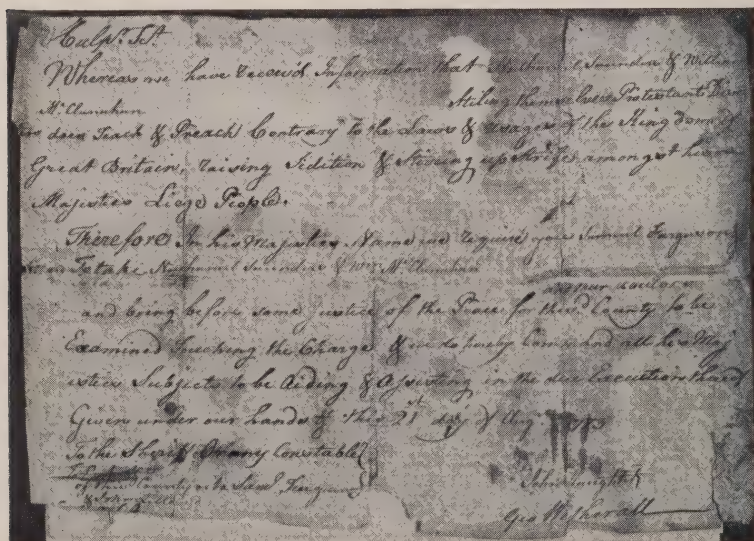
NATHANIEL SAUNDERS AND WILLIAM McCLANNAHAN

The Culpeper warrant, dated August 22, 1772, against Nathaniel Saunders, seems never to have been served, or, for some reason failed in bagging the game, and one year later two Justices of the Peace, united in issuing another warrant for the apprehension of Nathaniel Saunders and William McClannahan. This legal document was executed on August 21, 1773, exactly one year after the Culpeper Clerk sought to have Elder Saunders brought before the court to answer a Grand Jury presentment. That is, it was a year later, if our calculation about the reign of George III is correct.

NATHANIEL SAUNDERS AND WILLIAM McCLANNAHAN

*Imprisoned in Culpeper County Jail; Duration
of Imprisonment Unknown*

This *original* warrant, as it was issued and executed, is on file now in the Virginia Baptist Historical Society's rooms. While not as long as the Middlesex warrant for the arrest of Waller,



COPY OF THE ORIGINAL WARRANT FOR THE ARREST OF NATHANIEL SAUNDERS

Ware, Webber and Greenwood, which is the only other warrant this writer has been able to locate, yet it is couched in as legal terms, and no doubt was as effective. The abbreviations at the beginning stand for "Culpeper" and "Scilicet," which means, namely; to-wit; or that is to say. Here is the warrant with its peculiar phraseology and superabundant supply of capital letters:

"Culpr Sct.:

"Whereas we have received Information that Nathaniel Saunders & William McClannahan, stiling themselves Protestant Dissenters, does Teach & Preach Contrary to the Laws & usages of the Kingdom of Great Britian, raising Sedition & Stirring up Strife amongst his Majestie's Liege People.

"Therefore In his Majestie's Name we require you, Samuel Ferguson and John Lillard, to take Nathaniel Saunders and William McClannahan and their abettors and bring before some Justice of the Peace for the sd County to be Examined Touching the Charge, & we do hereby Command all his Majestie's Subjects to be Aiding & Assisting in the due Execution thereof.

"Given under our hands this 21st day of August, 1773.

John Slaughter

George Wetheral.

"To the Sheriff Or any Constable of this County, or to Samuel Ferguson and John Lillard.

"Executed: Pr Samuel Ferguson,
John Lillard."

On the same day that this warrant was issued, it was served and Nathaniel Saunders was brought before three Justices of the Peace and required to give bond for fifty pounds for his appearance at Court a month later, and in addition to furnish two securities in the sum of twenty-five pounds each. This official transaction was duly recorded as follows:

"Culpeper County (To Wit)

"Memorandum That on the 21st day of Augst 1773 Nathaniel Saunders Thos. Porter & John Price Personally came before us William Brown John Slaughter & Geo Wetherall and Severally acknowledged themselves

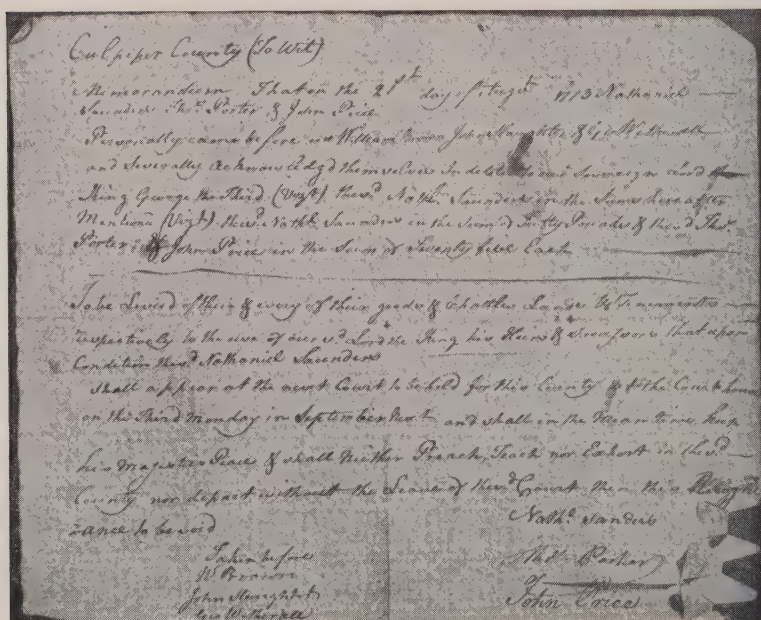
Indebted to our Sovereign Lord King George the Third
(vizt) thes.d Nathl. Saunders in the Sums here after Men-
tioned (vizt) thes.d Nathl. Saunders in the sum of Fifty
Pounds & thes.d Thos. Porter & John Price in the Sum of
Twenty-five Each

To be Levied of their & every of their goods & Chattles
Lands & Tenements—respectively to the use of our s.d Lord
the King his Heirs & Successors that upon Condition thes.d
Nathaniel Saunders

shall appear at the next Court to be held for this County at
the Court house on the Third Monday in September next
and shall in the mean time keep his Majesties Peace & shall
Neither Preach, Teach nor Exhort in thes.d County nor
depart without the Leave of thes.d Court then this recog-
nizance to be void

“Taken before
W Brown
John Slaughter
Geo Wetherall

Nathl. Sanders
Thos. Porter
John Price.”



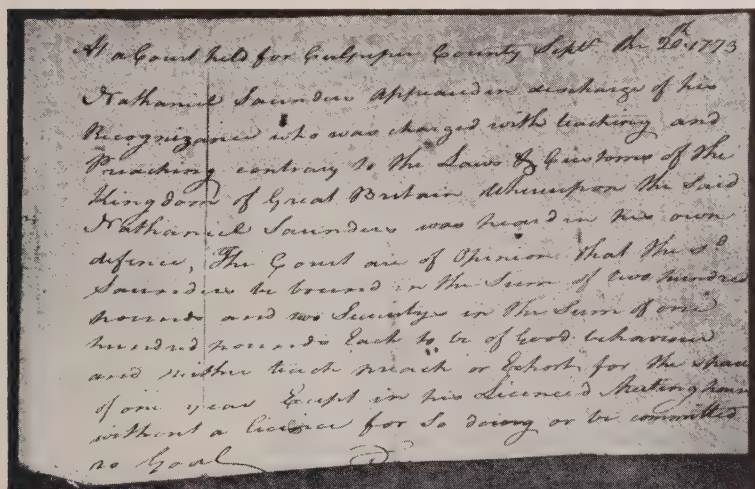
COPY OF THE ORIGINAL SAUNDERS' BOND

The "Warrant for his arrest," the "Memorandum of his bond" and a copy of the court record are all on file in the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, at the University of Richmond, Virginia.

At the September term of Court Elder Saunders was tried for the crime of "unlawful preaching." According to the record he was permitted to plead his own case, but was adjudged guilty of the charge, and bound in the sum of two hundred pounds "to be of good behaviour," or, "be committed to Goal." The whole procedure of the Court is thus described:

"At a Court held for Culpeper County Sept. the 20th, 1773.

"Nathaniel Saunders appeared in discharge of his Recognizance who was charged with teaching and Preaching contrary to the Laws & Customs of the Kingdom of Great Britian Whereupon the said Nathaniel Saunders was heard in his own defense, The Court are of Opinion that the s.d Saunders be bound in the sum of two hundred pounds and two Securities in the sum of one hundred pounds Each to be of good behaviour and neither teach preach or Exhort



A COPY OF THE ORIGINAL COURT RECORD ABOUT NATHANIEL SAUNDERS

for the space of one year Except in his Licensed Meeting house without a license for so doing or be committed to Goal."

This bond of "two hundred pounds," or nine hundred and seventy-three dollars and thirty cents, was a formidable amount for that early day, but the most bitter portion of the Justices' decision was that of the total prohibition "to teach, preach, or Exhort for the space of one year." The conditions for his release could not be complied with for conscientious reasons, and there was nothing to do but accept the other alternative and go to jail.

WILLIAM McCLANNAHAN

*Imprisoned in Culpeper County Jail; Duration
of Imprisonment Unknown*

It is singular that no mention is made of William McClannahan in this sentence, but in the warrant for the arrest of Saunders his name is mentioned. And yet there is a bit of evidence which seems to indicate that he was imprisoned at the same time with Nathaniel Saunders. It is to be found near the close of the following letter written by Elder David Thomas of Fauquier County, just six days after they were committed to jail. Thus it will be seen that although there were neither telephone nor telegraph lines at that time, yet the news of their incarceration seems to have spread with remarkable rapidity. The letter was one of encouragement from a brother minister, revealing a Christian sentiment of the most exalted type, and also showing the light in which the contemporaries of these imprisoned preachers viewed their determination to go to jail and suffer however much rather than do violence to their own consciences. This splendid letter follows:

"To Nathaniel Saunders, a Minister of Christ, now in prison
in Culpeper for preaching the Gospel there,
by Mr. Eaton.

"Dear Brother,—I hear you are put in prison for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Perhaps you think it hard. But O, what honor the Lord put upon you! I think you may be willing to suffer death now, seeing you are counted

worthy to enter a dungeon for your Master's sake. Hold out, my dear brother! Remember your Master—your royal, heavenly, divine Master—was nailed to a cursed tree for us. O, to suffer for Him is glory in the bud! O, let it never be said that a Baptist minister of Virginia ever wronged his conscience to get liberty, not to please God, but himself! O, your imprisonment (which I am satisfied is not from any rash proceedings of your own) is not a punishment, but a glory! 'If you suffer with Him you shall also reign with him.'

"Dear Brother, the bearer is waiting or I should have enlarged. This is only to let you know that I can pray for you with great freedom. Give my kind love to your fellow-prisoner, though I know him not. I hope he is a dear child of God. Pray for me, for I need it. I remain, dear brother,

Yours in our dear Lord Jesus,

David Thomas.

Fauquier, September 26, 1773.

N. B. Let me hear from you the first opportunity."

(Beale's *Simple* (1894), pp. 483-4.)

In a footnote of Beale's *Simple*, page 484, there is the following brief reference to William McClannahan, who seems to have been overlooked by our historians.

"This 'fellow-prisoner,' we may assume, was William McClannahan, named in the writ for Elder Saunder's arrest. William McClannahan was one of the boldest and most enterprising of the early Baptist preachers of Virginia. He was the first Baptist preacher to carry the new doctrine into the lower counties of the Northern Neck. Traces of his preaching there are to be found prior to the year 1770. Perhaps the earliest convert in Westmoreland county to the Baptist faith, wrote:

" 'McClannahan I plainly see
Was instrumental in calling me;
And Fristoe, that dear man of love,
Preached I was born of God.'

"Howe's (*Historical Collections*, page 238) says of this brave soldier of Christ, who raised one of the companies of Culpeper minute-men for the Revolutionary army: 'Captain

McClannahan was a Baptist clergyman and at first regularly preached to his men. His recruits were drawn principally from his own denomination. . . . The Baptist were among the most strenuous supporters of liberty'."

The author has been unable to learn where Elder McClannahan finished his course on earth, or where he was buried.

"One of the witnesses of the truth, when imprisoned for conscience's sake in Queen Mary's persecution of the Church is said to have thus written to a friend: 'A prisoner for Christ! What is this for a poor worm? Such honor have not all his saints. Both the degrees which I took in the University, have not set me so high as the honour of becoming a prisoner of the Lord.'" (John Whitecross's *Anecdotes*, Vol. III, p. 170.)

And David Thomas voices the same sentiments in his letter above to Nathaniel Saunders.

It is gratifying to the writer to be able to state how this letter has been preserved, and he believes the information will be interesting to his readers.

The original letter was sent to Mr. Wm. Sands, while he was editor of the *Religious Herald*, by Mr. Francis J. Sanders, of Orange County, who was a grandson of Nathaniel Saunders, and it was accompanied with the following note:

"Brother Sands—I also send an old letter written by David Thomas to my grandfather, while in jail at Culpeper Court House, having been cast into prison for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you think it will interest the numerous readers of the *Herald*, please insert it."

Editor Sands did publish it with the following comment:

"We return him our hearty thanks, and we can venture to say, those of our readers, for the precious and interesting reminiscence of a past age, in the original letter from Elder Thomas to his grandfather. We live in a more tolerant age, and our ministers can now proclaim the gospel without being subjected to bonds or imprisonment. It was not the case of our forefathers. We have yet living witnesses among us, who can testify to the trials and persecutions of Baptist

preachers, for no other cause than seeking to warn their fellow-men to flee from wrath to come. These worthies counted not their lives dear to them, so that they might win souls to Christ. The walls of a prison could not deaden their zeal, nor abate their ardor; but re-echoed with their songs of praise, and the voice of prayer and thanksgiving that they were counted worthy to suffer in their Master's cause. To this martyr-spirit we are greatly indebted for our religious liberty, our steady increase, and present elevated position. Dear, then, to us, ought to be their memories; potent their influence, as examples of zeal, devotion, and entire consecration to their Redeemer; and worthy are they to be had in everlasting remembrance.

"The imprisonment of Waller, Craig, and others, in Fredericksburg; of Waller, Greenwood, Wafford, &c., in Middlesex; of Craig and Burrus in Caroline; Craig, &c., in Orange, and others in Chesterfield, are events well known through Semple's *History*. In Culpeper, Fauquier, and Loudon, the Baptists were as violently persecuted as in the counties named. In these portions of the State, the ministers were chiefly Regular Baptist; Waller and Craig were Separates. Of the Regular Baptists, David Thomas was one of the earliest and most popular ministers—the founder of some of the oldest churches in the State. A learned man, a bold, fearless, successful minister—distinguished for his eloquence not less than his piety and zeal—one of those eminent worthies, to whom Virginia Baptists are so much indebted; and the benefit of whose labors we are now so abundantly realizing."

How long Nathaniel Saunders and William McClannahan remained in prison is not known, neither is there at present any information as to how they obtained their release. But it matters not how long they remained in Culpeper jail, we are not to think for one moment that their experience, bitter as it may have been, caused them to deviate a hair's breadth from the course they had mapped out for themselves. They evidently went right on preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, whether in prison or out of prison; and there is one more bit of documentary evidence relative to Nathaniel Saunders, in the shape of a note addressed to him

in 1775, and which indicates that he was then busily engaged in the pursuit of his holy calling:

"I understand that you intend to preach this day—near William Tooles. You certainly know that such proceedings are contrary to Law.—I hereby forewarn you neither to Preach, Exhort, or attempt any thing of the sort in this Neighborhood as you shall answer the same at your Peril, as I am determined to order a Prosecution ag'st you if you attempt to.

I am Yours &c

N. Grant

"To Mr. Nathaniel Saunders

Saturday 9th Apl. 1775."

Nathaniel Saunders began to preach in 1766, two or three years after he was baptized, and in 1768 he was ordained to the care of Mountain Run Church, which was constituted at the same time, and of which he was pastor until it was dissolved in 1782, when most of the members joined Mountponey. "He lived and died in the estimation of all that knew him, a pious and good man. After suffering a great deal, with a long and painful illness, he finished his earthly pilgrimage towards the last of the summer, 1808." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 177.)

The place of Elder Saunders's burial and whether or not his sacred dust has been marked by any enduring monument are both matters that are unknown to the compiler of these notes.

STAFFORD COUNTY

County Seat—Stafford

LEWIS LUNSFORD

According to Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, page 138, Lewis Lunsford was "born in the County of Stafford, Virginia, about the year 1753."

"We now come to a man," says Semple's *History*, page 417, "who, in point of talents, as a preacher, was never excelled in Virginia; and by many it is doubted whether he ever had a superior any where else. * * * At an early stage of his life, while attending the ministry of William Fristoe, he was happily

arrested by divine mercy. Mr. Fristoe baptized him when a boy. He immediately, both in private and in public, began to stand up as an advocate for the gospel. His talents, at this tender age, commanded attention, and procured for him the flattering appellation of *The Wonderful Boy*. After moving in a more confined circle for some few years, he began to enlarge his borders. About 1774, divine Providence directed his attention to the lower counties; in the Northern Neck. Wherever he placed his foot as a preacher, there attended a blessing. Believers were added to the church, through his instrumentality, in most of the neighborhoods of these lower counties. His preaching made a great noise; not only for its ingenuity, but for its novelty. Here, as in most other places where the Baptists preached, they cried out that some new doctrine was started; that the church was in danger. Mr. L. was accounted worthy to share a part of this opposition. A clergyman appointed a set day to preach against the Annabaptists. Crowds attended to hear him. He told stories about Jack of Leyden, and Cromwell's roundheads: but he could not by such tales, stop the gospel current; now swelling to a torrent."

Dr. Semple places Lunsford's initial work in the lower counties of the Northern Neck "about 1774," but there is a strong probability that he began there at an earlier date, perhaps 1773; and it may be the following newspaper notice that the writer discovered has a direct bearing upon Lunsford's early ministry in Richmond County.

In the *Virginia Gazette*, September 16, 1773, there is in the news column the following paragraph from Williamsburg, about an accident that happened in Richmond County when the parson preached against the Annabaptists:

"There had like to have been a Number of broken Limbs last Sunday fe'nnight at the lower Church in Lunenburg Parish, Richmond County, by some Part of the Gallery where the Negroes sit giving Way, which alarming the Congregation, they every one made the best of their Way out. Many were violently squeezed, some fell down and were trod upon, particularly a poor Negro Woman big with Child, who was so much hurt that her Life is despaired of. A Negro Man likewise had his Legs much torn and bruised. After the Fright and Disturbance occasioned thereby were

over, the Congregation, which was remarkably numerous that Day, again repaired to Church, where an excellent Discourse was delivered by the Reverend Mr. Giberne, exposing the dangerous Tenets of those Sectaries the Annabaptists, which are so very pernicious to Society, and subversive to almost every Christian and moral Duty."

That is strong language and covers a large territory, but it no doubt expressed the prevailing sentiment at that time, not only in Richmond County, but at the Capital of the Colony, where this paper was printed.

Elder Henry Toler preached two funeral sermons about Lewis Lunsford. They were printed in pamphlet form under the following date line, "Westmoreland, March 7, 1795," and on page 13 Elder Toler tells how Lunsford's message was received in Richmond County, and also gives his version of the meeting where the gallery collapsed with such frightful results:

"A few Baptists scattered in Richmond, which last circumstance seemed to be the first that introduced Mr. Lunsford there. As he believed, so he preached and practiced, independent of all characters and societies. He soon raised a great cry for and against him, *some said, He is a good man: Others said, not; but he deceiveth the people.* Baptist ministers particularly through the state had been harrassed by episcopal parsons, magistrates, sheriffs, lawyers and Plebians; nor were the Northern Neckites better disposed toward them than others.

"Mr. G—b—n, an episcopal Parson in Richmond County, had without success dogmatized the Presbyterians; and after the baptists preached in his parish he proved as fruitless in his attempts on them. He gave notice he should preach at his upper church (chapel) on the ——— Sunday in ——— a sermon against the Anna-baptists. So many people assembled and crowded in to hear the WONDERFUL DISCOURSE, that the gallery cracked before the *Divine Service* began; the people became much alarmed, some supposing the Lord was sending a judgment on them for the design of the meeting; others conjecturing the Negroes were rising in rebellion; and others . . . they did not know what—all hastened out as fast as possible, some over others, some through windows, some were trampled on, and left with scarcely all

their clothes, or life; and some never stoped till they got home. However, the most of the concourse, after this wild confusion, rallied, went in again, and heard the parson say an abundance about the tenets and practice of the German Annabaptists, and assert it as a fact, that the present Baptists sprang from them, and were equally to be avoided. But he could not obtain the credulity of all his hearers, nor a general applause for the *Extraordinary Sermon*."

According to Beale's *Semple*, page 473, it was:

"About 1774 he (Lewis Lunsford) made his appearance in Westmoreland, Richmond, Lancaster, and Northumberland counties, where for a time his preaching was interrupted by mob violence and legal proscriptions. These persecutions served, however, to increase his popularity, and in 1778 Morattico church was formed and he chosen as their pastor."

This was an era in the world's history when great principles were at stake, and the old Scottish proverb that it takes "A stout heart for a stiff brea," was very appropriate. A shrewd attempt was made by the British government at this time to induce the Americans to abandon a beloved principle they had been contending for with great unanimity; namely, that they might be free and exempt from all Taxes imposed on them without their own consent." Peyton Randolph, Speaker, of the House of Burgesses, had written the King more than two and a half years before upon that very subject, and according to the *Virginia Gazette* of February 14, 1771, addressed him again as follows:

"To the King's Most Excellent Majesty

"Graciously to permit your ever dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Burgesses of Virginia, now met in General Assembly, to approach your Royal Presence, and with all Humility to renew their most earnest Entreaties that your Majesty, in your great Goodness, would be pleased to extend your fatherly Protection to them and all their Fellow Subjects in America." Etc.

But notwithstanding these and similar "earnest entreaties," "The British government decreed that the East India Company which had seventeen million pounds of tea shut up in warehouses

because Americans would not buy it, could send tea to the colonies without paying an export duty, and thus be able to sell it at a lower price than any other nation. It was hoped that this would entice the Americans to pay the import duty, and thus surrender the principle they had been pleading for. During the summer cargoes of tea were loaded for America." (Newman's *America* (1881), p. 273.)

The tea began to arrive and "Tea Parties" were held in various sections of the country and patriotic resolutions were adopted declaring that the sending of the tea was "an attack on the liberties of America."

Now while these indignation meetings were being held throughout the country and the fierce political struggle was being waged, it is but natural that there should have been a lull in proceedings against the dissenters of Virginia, and accordingly there is only one more case of religious persecution to be noted during the year 1773, and that was in the county of Orange.

ORANGE COUNTY

County Seat—Orange

In a previous chapter mention has been made of Elijah Morton being ousted from his position as a Justice of the Peace of Orange County because he was a Baptist. This occurred in 1768, the same year of the imprisonment of Allen Wyley, John Corbley, Elijah Craig, and Thomas Chambers. The Grand Jury presented Andrew Tribble and Thomas Mastin in 1769, and now we come to the case of Joseph Spencer, which is not mentioned by any of our church historians, but has been reported in Scott's *History of Orange County, Virginia* (1907), page 50:

JOSEPH SPENCER

*Imprisoned in Orange County; Duration
of Imprisonment Unknown*

"In 1773 Joseph Spencer, being brought before the court by a warrant under the hand of Rowland Thomas, Gent., for a breach of his good behavior in teaching and preaching the gospel as a Baptist not having a license; and it appearing that he did teach and preach as aforesaid, he at the same

time insisting that he decented (dissented) from the principles of an Anabaptist ; ordered, that he be committed to the custody of the sheriff until he give bond conditioned not to teach or preach without first obtaining a license as the law directs. Bond was required in a penalty of one hundred pounds, and he is allowed the liberty of the prison bounds on giving security."

The official record of the Court of this case is found on page 287 of the Order Book of Orange county for 1769-1777, and is more explicit in details. It is here given in its peculiar phraseology, as it tells the story of Mr. Spencer's arrest, trial and commitment to the custody of the sheriff :

"At a court held for Orange county on Thursday the 28th day of October 1773.

Present

William Bell	Reuben Daniel	} Gent.
Rowland Thomas	Thomas Bell	

"Joseph Spencer being Brought before the Court by a Warrant under the hand of Rowland Thomas Gent. for a Breach of his Good Behaviour in teaching & Preaching The Gospel as a Baptist not having license and it appearing to The Court that he did teach and Preach as aforesaid he at the same time insisting that he Disented from the Principals of an Anna Baptist It is therefore the Oppinion of The Court and they do order that this sd. Joseph Spencer be Committed to the Custody of the Sheriff Until he give Bond with Security Which Bond is to be Conditioned that he shall not teach or Preach as afores.d Without first Obtaining a License for so doing as the Law Directs and that his Bond Shall be for the Sum of one hundred pounds and his Security in the Sum of Fifty pounds And the Court doth allow him the Bounds he giving Security for the same.

"Ordered that the Court be Adjourned till Tomorrow Morning 8 o'Clock.

W. Bell."

According to Mr. Scott the "Prison Bounds" embraced "An area, not exceeding ten acres, about the jail where prisoners not committed for treason or felony had liberty, on giving security, to continue therein until discharged ; mostly for the benefit of per-

sons imprisoned for debt, the privilege lasting for only one year."

Joseph Spencer appears to have remained in close confinement for nearly a month, or until the next term of court, when he petitioned the Court to be allowed the privilege of living in the Court House. It would be interesting now to know why this peculiar request was made, but whatever the reasons, they seem to have been sufficiently worthy of consideration, so that on page 295, of the same Order Book of Orange County, we have the Court's favorable action recorded:

"Thursday the 25th day of November 1773

"Joseph Spencer has Leave to Live in the Court house he Indemnifying the County if the same Should be Damaged by his Living in the Same."

Having secured the Court's favorable action upon this request, and being thus provided with a place in which to live, he is in a position to enjoy the "Prison Bounds," if he can secure a reduction in bond required by the former court; so when the adjourned court re-convened the next day, Friday, according to appointment, another petition was received from Joseph Spencer, the result of which is recorded on page 299 of the same Order Book, as follows:

"A Petition this day Offered by Joseph Spencer Which is Admitted to record & on his further Motion the Sum heretofore mentioned to be bound in for reasons now offered is to be lessened to the Sum of Twenty pounds and two Securities in the Sum of Ten pounds each Whereupon the s.d Spencer with Wm. Morton and Jonathan Davis his Securities came into Court and acknowledged Themselves Indebted to our Sovereign Lord the King in the above mentioned Sums respectively to be levied of their Goods and Chattels Land & Tenements And this recognizance to be Forfeited if this s.d Spencer is Guilty of a Breach of his Good Behaviour According to a Former Order."

Presumably this Mr. Spencer was the same Joseph Spencer who was a constituent member of the Upper-Spotsylvania church when it was organized on November 20, 1767, and was dismissed from that church to become one of the constituent members of the Rapid-Ann church on December 4, 1769.

How long Mr. Spencer was domiciled in the Court House is not known, neither how he obtained his freedom. However it appears from an old Revolutionary soldier's petition praying for a pension, that Mr. Spencer was the Captain of a Virginia military company as early as 1775. In this old soldier's petition, which was addressed "To the Senate and House of Representatives of Virginia," and which according to Mr. Scott's *History*, page 75, is on file in the State Library, it is stated:

"Your petitioner begs leave to represent that he enlisted in the service of the State of Virginia as early as 1775 in what was then called the Minute Service in Captain Joseph Spencer's Company from Orange County, Va., etc."

It is not known whether Mr. Spencer continued to preach to him after his liberation or not. There is only one other reference in the county records, and that has to do with his "health" and not his "religion." In 1778 "on the petition of Joseph Spencer leave is granted him to inoculate for the smallpox at his house in this County." (Scott's *History*, p. 177.)

JEREMIAH MOORE
Alexandria, Va.

Elder Jeremiah Moore was born in Prince William County on June 7, 1746. He resided in Fairfax County, was reared in the Established Church and was a lay reader at Acquia Creek church, near Fredericksburg. When he learned the way of the Lord as proclaimed by the Baptists he joined the ranks of that sect which was everywhere spoken against, thereby espousing the cause of the weak against the strong. It took a strong will and indomitable energy to cast one's self into the maelstrom of conflicting opinions of that day regarding the wisdom of Religious Liberty. But Jeremiah Moore possessed the necessary prerequisites to make him one of the outstanding antagonists in the inevitable conflict that was being waged by our Baptist forefathers and other dissenters at that time. He buffeted the waves and in company with his brethren finally succeeded in gaining a firm and strong footing on the solid ground of a great truth. Only a few incidents have been preserved in connection with the life story

of this good man, but these mere fragments are enough to give us a wonderfully comprehensive idea of the kind of a man he was as well as the quality of service he rendered his denomination. He was one of the early fruits of Elder David Thomas's ministry. Mr. Thomas was the first Baptist that Mr. Moore ever knew, and:

"It is mentioned that when he was baptized, David Thomas said to a friend: 'I think I have this day baptized a preacher.' And so it was. He had baptized a man who was destined to proclaim, for more then forty-five years the glad tidings of salvation, and to evangelize, not only a large part of Virginia, but also to preach in Maryland, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and New York." (J. B. Taylor, Jr., in *Religious Herald*, March 21, 1872.)

Elder Moore, having been a lay reader in the Established Church, had many friends within her fold. His espousal of the Baptist cause seems to have aroused bitter enmity on the part of some of these, and conflicting emotions in the minds of many others. Dr. E. B. Jackson, who was pastor of the church in Alexandria from 1916-1923 that was founded by Elder Moore, thus describes the feeling that prevailed with reference to his action in uniting with the Baptists:

"Jeremiah Moore became a member in 1772 of the Chapawamsick Baptist church in Stafford county, Va. His baptism made no small stir among his friends, most of whom were Episcopalians and among them enemies of the Baptist. Some pretended to pity his folly, while others treated him with contempt; and all agreed to give him up for lost as to any future usefulness to himself or to his family. By becoming a Baptist he gave up a small office in the establishment at Acquia Creek worth 2,400 lbs. of tobacco yearly, and with it the friendship of many influential characters. Money was always secondary with him." (Dr. E. B. Jackson's Speech, in *Richmond Virginian*, May 11, 1920.)

According to Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), page 219, Jeremiah Moore "commenced that ministerial work in which he was engaged nearly forty-five years, through difficulties and trials, with a zeal and ability that have fallen to the lot of few."

In common with the Baptist preachers of his day and generation he felt the rigors of that law which was enacted by the Virginia Assembly in 1643, the validity of which very few even dared to question. This law so flagrantly violated by Jeremiah Moore, reads as follows:

“All ministers shall be conformable to the orders and constitution of the Church of England and the laws therein established, and not otherwise to be permitted to teach or preach publicly or privately.” (Quoted by Dr. Jackson.)

Those who disobeyed this decree of the Virginia tribunal were summarily dealt with. They were arrested under various pretexts and committed to jail as though they were guilty of some heinous crime.

JEREMIAH MOORE

*Imprisoned in Alexandria Jail, Certainly Once, Perhaps
Three Times; Duration of Imprisonment Unknown*

Jeremiah Moore suffered in various ways for the Truth as it is in Jesus. From the unfortunate phraseology used by our historians with reference to Mr. Moore's imprisonment it is impossible to determine whether he was imprisoned *three* times, or only *once*. We are told that he was apprehended three times and conducted to Alexandria to be lodged in the old Colonial jail, but it does not seem clear that he was actually committed to jail three times, as all the old Fairfax records have been destroyed it is impossible now to settle the question. He *may have been* arrested and incarcerated in the Alexandria gaol more than once, but there is no way of proving it. All one can do is to give the various records as they are, and wait for some future discoveries to solve the problem.

“Three times he was apprehended by the officers of the crown and conducted to the town of Alexandria, to be lodged in the public jail, and once committed by one of his Majesty's justices to jail for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. The mittimus is yet in the hands of his family, and will, it is hoped, be preserved, as evidence of his faithfulness in his Master's cause. This mittimus is in the following words: ‘I send you herewith the body of Jeremiah Moore, who is a

preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and also a stroller.' To escape imprisonment in this case, it was necessary to obtain from the authorities a license to preach at certain places." (Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, First Series (1860), pp. 219 and 220.)

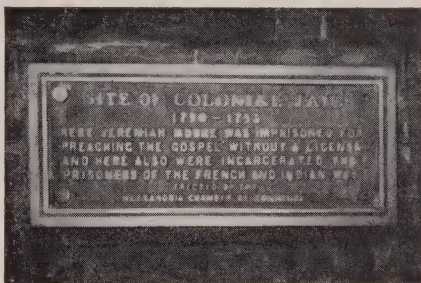
Dr. Taylor's statement given above might be construed to mean that he was carried to Alexandria three times and lodged in the public jail for preaching contrary to law, or in an unlicensed house, and that on another occasion he was committed to jail by "one of his Majesty's justices" for no other cause than that of "preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ." Or it may mean that he was carried to Alexandria three times in all, and that in one of these instances they could find no fault in him except that he "preached the gospel of Jesus Christ." Unless he was actually incarcerated in the Alexandria jail more than once, it would be hard to understand why the judge should make the remark that he should lie in jail until he rotted. That this remark was made is not a mere matter of hearsay, but we have Jeremiah Moore's own word for it. There are several references to this statement in the various histories, but Elder Moore bears his own testimony to the fact that it was actually said by the judge on the bench.

A recent discovery of two pamphlets published by Jeremiah Moore gives the most conclusive evidence of his imprisonment. These papers were brought to light in Cincinnati and now belong to the Virginia Baptist Historical Society. One of them is a pamphlet entitled "An Enquiry into the Nature and Propriety of Ecclesiastical Establishments," with an introductory letter addressed to President James Madison; and was written from "Moorefield," November 5th, 1808. In this introduction on page 26 of this pamphlet Elder Moore says:

"The fact is I have felt the effects of an ecclesiastical establishment and have been told by the judge from his seat, 'you shall lay in jail until you rot,' when my crime was no other than preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, as the indictment read on the trial will show, without any other color or pretense or the least insinuation that I pretended to be so, but that I was actually such, nor was there anything offered in evidence to prove that my preaching was not what the indictment expressed: and although this may be said, cer-

tainly your judges had very little understanding, yet it is always true that there is nothing so offensive to an established religion as the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It seems hard to account for the inhuman sentence of the judge on the bench, unless it was caused by this pioneer preacher being brought before him so many times that a simple commitment to the gaol had become a commonplace, and the judge became so exasperated that in the heat of his displeasure he not only sent him to the jail again, but added, "you shall lay in jail until you rot."



SITE OF COLONIAL JAIL IN
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

The spot where the old jail stood in the town of Alexandria, Virginia, has been appropriately marked by a bronze tablet, and a picture of this tablet may be found in this volume. The jail was built in 1753, was used for convicts and French prisoners captured on the Western border, and stood on the site of the present (1920) Police Headquarters, on North Fairfax Street. The marker was placed there, along with other tablets marking historic spots in the city, by a committee of the Chamber of Commerce of Alexandria, of which Dr. E. B. Jackson was the chairman.

"Persecution and affliction are said to be proof of a minister's call. Mr. Moore soon had this proof. In 1773, while he was preaching in the bounds of the church called Difficult, a magistrate attended by the rector of the parish, had him arrested by a constable and ordered to prison. His mittimus was written in these remarkable words: 'I send you herewith the body of Jeremiah Moore, who is a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and also a stroller,' &c. This was somewhat similar to Pilate's inscribing over the cross of Christ, '*Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews.*' (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 309.)

In the July 15, 1917, issue of *The Sunday Star*, of Washington, D. C., a writer, signing himself "The Rambler," has an article entitled "The Rambler Writes of Old Home of Jeremiah Moore," in which it is stated that:

"There is an especially interesting fact or set of facts relating to the Rev. Jeremiah Moore which the Rambler hopes to deal with at greater length in some subsequent narrative. When Moore was arrested in 1773 while preaching 'within the bounds of the Church called Difficult'—which, of course, was a church on or close to Difficult Run—he was conveyed to the prison of Fairfax county."

In Dr. E. B. Jackson's booklet, *The Romance of Historic Alexandria*, pages 45 and 46, he refers to this imprisonment as follows:

"It ought to be said that the Establishment represented the union of Church and State, and that civil jurisdiction had been forced upon the church in return for financial support. Sometimes a rector was found who had little vision. Drastic measures were taken and Jeremiah Moore felt the heavy weight of his former connection, and he was told, 'You shall lie in jail till you rot, or obey the law.' All other non-conformist preachers obeyed the law but the young preacher stood firm against the law which permitted such an outrage, and rather than retract, he remained in jail and preached, like Bunyan, through the latticed door. He attracted crowds by the very novelty of the situation. Washington and Mason frequently came to Alexandria, and must have known of his imprisonment. No protest could be made against a well-understood law. (It is not unlikely this determined young preacher felt that by remaining in jail the question of *religious liberty* would not be ignored in the issues of the Revolution.)"

"The Rambler's" article in *The Washington Star*, to which reference has been made, contains this additional statement with reference to Jeremiah Moore's trial:

"In the trial held in the courthouse the prisoner was defended by Patrick Henry, the able champion of freedom of religious worship."

Dr. Jackson's book has a more detailed reference to this same interesting incident in the life of Jeremiah Moore:

"But a significant thing happened: Patrick Henry, who at that time was in frequent communication with Washington (on the authority of a well-grounded tradition in the Moore family) was brought to Alexandria for the defense of Moore. Col. Charles Broadwater, neighbor and friend to Jeremiah Moore and likewise to Washington, was then Justice of the Peace. Mr. Henry is said to have made, probably in the Court House nearby, a great impassioned speech, using these traditional words: 'Great God, gentlemen, a man in prison for preaching the gospel of the Son of God'."

Rev. E. B. Jackson, D. D., who was for seven and a half years (1916-1923), pastor of the church in Alexandria that was founded by Jeremiah Moore and has given much time and thought to both founder and church, delivered an address before the Columbia Association of Baptist Churches, in Washington, D. C., on April 21, 1920. This speech was published in the *Richmond Virginian*, May 11, 1920, and contains the following reference to Mr. Moore, the times in which he lived, and his imprisonment:

"Washington and Mason fought a brave fight in those days for civil liberty. Geo. Mason, the author of the 'Bill of Rights' in the old court house of Alexandria, presented in 1774 the 'Fairfax County Resolves' in which *for the first time* the principles of religious liberty are incorporated, but you are not to forget that Jeremiah Moore in 1773 in the same court house (on Market Square) was tried before Col. (Justice) Broadwater for 'preaching the gospel without license'."

"A little Baptist church had been built in Fairfax county on the 'Creek called Difficult' not far from Alexandria. He had been converted one year before (1772), and who felt the call to preach, was found preaching at this church. The rector and the constable came and ordered him to prison. His mittimus was written in these remarkable words: 'I send,' etc.

"The case attracted a good deal of attention, for Semple plainly indicates that Mr. Moore became a conspicuous and marked figure and had challenged a well recognized right of

the establishment. He lay in the old Colonial jail in Alexandria (located on Market Square) awaiting trial, meantime occupying his spare time, through the latticed door, preaching the gospel of free grace, without ritualism, ceremonialism, or sacramentarianism. Nothing must be placed between the soul and its God. What a stage setting it was indeed.

"Once indeed he received the sentence of the judge, '*to lie in jail during life,*' at the court house visited often by Washington and Mason.

"Washington was meantime a member of the Inter-Colonial Consultation Committee which produced a panic in London, by preparing for resistance to England. Patrick Henry was also a member of that committee and was in close touch with Mt. Vernon. Col. Broadwater, a distinguished soldier and an intimate friend of Washington was at the time a vestryman of Fairfax and justice of the peace, (Callahan) Washington in those days must have known of the determined young man in jail nearby for preaching. But not a word of protest is recorded from him. Did his oath as vestryman and as justice bind him to unwilling silence? But a startling and well authenticated tradition lingers in the Moore family, that Patrick Henry, the famous advocate in the 'Parson's Case,' was attracted by the case of Jeremiah Moore. Did Washington secure him? Washington was in intimate correspondence with Henry then and they rode together horseback a few months later to the first Continental congress through Alexandria. One thing is certain, Mr. Moore is released from his life imprisonment and obtains legal license for places of preaching. What if we had Henry's speech! Washington probably heard it."

In a letter to the compiler of these notes, dated at "Lexington, Virginia, Dec. 15 -'23," Dr. Jackson adds this statement:

"I believe my address is practically accurate though strangely the official records of the imprisonment are not in existence and local Alex. historians were loth to admit what Semple declares in his history, & what is a well-confirmed tradition in the Moore family."

There remains but one more witness with reference to the trials and imprisonment of Jeremiah Moore, and that is Hon. R. Wal-

ton Moore, of Washington, D. C., Assistant Secretary of the United States and a great-grandson of the old pioneer preacher:

"There is a reliable tradition that in one of his trials he was defended by Patrick Henry in a very dramatic speech. It is also well authenticated that one of the warrants against him was dismissed by the Justice of the Peace (Col. Broadwater, who served with Gen. Washington in the House of Burgesses) who, in dismissing it, authorized him to go ahead and preach as he pleased."

Just how long Jeremiah Moore remained in Fairfax prison is not known, but it is a fact that he was released long before his body had begun to rot, as the Justice threatened—"you shall lay in jail until you rot." It is certain that he lived on for many years afterwards and is credited with a zeal for and activity in, the vineyard of the Lord, which has perhaps no parallel in the history of our denomination. However his release from prison and the advice of Col. Broadwater "to go ahead and preach as he pleased," did not exempt him from maltreatment at the hands of the enemies of that cause he had so ardently espoused, as the following account, given in Taylor's *Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers*, Vol. I, page 220, will prove:

JEREMIAH MOORE

Brutally Assaulted by a Mob

"On one occasion he was brutally assailed by a mob, headed by two magistrates. He and another minister were taken with the intention of plunging them in the water. They succeeded in throwing his companion into the water, and then they were both released. At various times he was subjected to the scoffing and abuse of his enemies, they breathing out threatnings and slaughter against him."

This is the only item of persecution of Elder Moore, outside of his imprisonment, or imprisonments, that this author has been able to locate. The next historical fact is brief, but very comprehensive, and is a footnote on page 309 of Semple's *History*, published in 1810:

"In 1795, Mr. Moore preached at a General Committee, in Louisa, where the compiler heard him observe, that he had

travelled and preached distances sufficient to reach twice round the world. He has lost no time since that."

Benedict's *History*, Vol. II, page 95, which was published in 1813, gives this somewhat fuller statement:

"Rev. Jeremiah Moore, who is esteemed one of their greatest divines, in 1795, when he was 49 years old, had travelled for the purpose of preaching, and that mostly in his own State, distances sufficient to reach twice round the earth."

To travel "distances sufficient to reach twice around the earth" would be a notable feat even in this day, but when you consider the roads of that day and the mode of travel at Jeremiah Moore's command, his achievement is the more remarkable. Jefferson speaks of a trip he made from Richmond to New York in 1790: "The roads through the whole were so bad that we could never go more than three miles an hour, sometimes not more than two, and, in the night but one."

In an article by Dr. Thomas S. Dunaway, "Old Baptist Churches in Virginia," published in the *Religious Herald*, June 14, 1923, it is stated that:

"In Virginia the best road was from Williamsburg to Richmond. Yet going at the highest speed it took two days. Travel in Virginia in those days was almost exclusively by horse-back."

In *Travels in Virginia in Revolutionary Times*, edited by A. J. Morrison, the Duke of La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt describes a trip he made from Williamsburg to Richmond in 1796 as follows:

"Crowded in the stage by ten passengers and their baggage, we did not arrive before 11 o'clock at night, though we had set out from Williamsburg at 8 in the morning; the rain, which has been abundant during the last two days, having rendered the roads very bad."

In William Fristoe's *History of the Kettocton Baptist Association* (1808), pages 80-82, there is this account which has little in it to make the means of identification certain. It is possible

that it may refer to Elder Jeremiah Moore, and one of the "three times he was apprehended by the officers of the crown and conducted to the town of Alexandria":

JEREMIAH MOORE

Apprehended and Carried Before a Justice

"At another time, at a distant place, a preacher was apprehended as soon as done preaching, and taken from the place immediately to justice—the charge was, preaching; the magistrate enquired what had been preached? the evidence, when called upon, appeared confused, and when questioned and cross questioned, their testimony was contradictory; the justice could get no just information, or intelligible account from them respecting the matter: at which the preacher requested the magistrate to allow him to relate what he had asserted in his sermon, to which he supposed the evidence would agree; he was allowed, and when he had cited the same things he had before mentioned in his sermon, the evidence was brought to recollection and assented to it.—It appeared the greatest distress on this occasion, was that the above cited preacher had advanced doctrine in direct opposition to the established church, which charge, could it have been substantiated, would certainly, at that time have procured his confinement in the dungeon: but when the matter came to light, and proper information obtained, it was quite the reverse; it was true the preacher in his sermon made mention of several things in the articles of the high church, but it was in a way of approbation of them, as being what himself, in heart espoused, and in public advocated; the truth was, their anger was raised, and their resentment levelled against the preacher; because they were in a plain and pointed manner told that the articles of their church as it respected the essentials of religion, was sound and orthodox; and that they were grossly ignorant of their contents, and careless about them; that they had adulterated and departed from their own system, and that their immoral conduct and dissipated behaviour gave abundant proof that they knew nothing of vital religion, nor ever felt its quickening power; and it followed their christianity was no more than a name without the substance. When the magistrate was rightly in-

formed, it was judged a malicious prosecution, and nothing deserving bonds or imprisonment; and accordingly the preacher was set at liberty."

Perhaps William Fristoe is referring to Jeremiah Moore in the following comment, found in his *History of the Kettocton Baptist Association* (1808), page 83:

"Another instance we have received information of, that will scarce admit of comparison; a magistrate issued a warrant for the apprehending one of our preachers—the contents of which was, the officer was to bring him before him or some other justice of the peace, to answer for his conduct as touching preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified; this was coming to the point in the nigh way, this was saying with a great deal of simplicity what the ground work of complaint was, while wit and invention in other instances would have cast a cloak over it, and have given it a different colour. According to instruction the preacher was taken by the officer and carried to justice, but when the crime for which he was apprehended was examined, it appeared shameful to the last degree; enmity itself was stunned at it—the preacher was immediately discharged, and that evening held meeting in a large town where he had been taken for trial, and an end was put to that process."

An ever memorable and far reaching event occurred in the city of "magnificent distances," in which Jeremiah Moore played a conspicuous part. We quote from Dr. Jackson again:

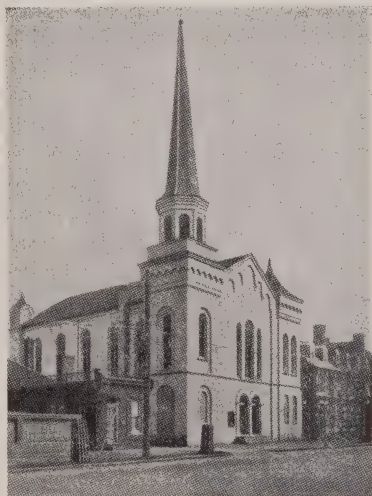
"A Baptist minister, Wm. Parkinson, had come from Maryland in 1801, and was elected chaplain of the first congress. As 'meeting houses' were few in the Capitol city, Mr. Parkinson preached Lord's Day morning in the Capitol building and in the afternoon in the Old Treasury, which stood on the site of the present treasury. Mr. Parkinson, writing afterwards concerning these experiences, says: 'The members of congress attended abundantly better than I expected. I have moreover the pleasure of stating that the president (Thomas Jefferson) has missed but one of my meetings at the Capitol.' (It will be recalled that Jefferson's sister was a member of a Baptist church.)

"We have record of a very significant event that took place the very next year, March 1802 (in the files of the 'National

Intelligence'), in which Moore and Parkinson had part. The news item runs: 'After a suitable sermon delivered by Mr. Moore, they constituted a church by the name of "*The Baptist Church in Washington*," as an additional inducement to such as feel inclined to remove to this city and also to traveling preachers of that denomination to visit their brethren and preach to the people in this place. Congress was then in session for the second time in Washington, and this city contained less than 4,000 inhabitants'."

A hundred years afterwards, 1901, Washington had a population of 278,718. Our Capital city now (1938) has 525,000 inhabitants, and the Baptists have multiplied until they have 30 Baptist churches, in the District of Columbia, with a total enrollment of 19,519. "The Baptist Church in Washington" is now known by the name of "First Baptist Church," and after a creditable history of more than a century and a quarter, has a membership of 1,069.

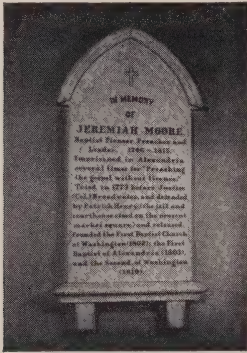
This event, as far reaching as it was, does not appear to have given Jeremiah Moore as much genuine satisfaction as the founding of the "First Baptist Church of Alexandria," Virginia, in 1803. He seems to have regarded *this church as a memorial of his imprisonment*, in the very place where he was thrice called to answer at the bar of his country for preaching the gospel of a precious Christ, and where he received the sentence of the judge *to lie in jail during life*. There were many other ways in which he was sorely tried, but "From all these afflictions," says Taylor's *Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers*, Vol. I, page 220, "he was wonderfully, and in an unexpected way, delivered, not without hope of meeting in a happy



ALEXANDRIA BAPTIST CHURCH

eternity many of these his enemies and their posterity. No doubt is entertained but that the church of Alexandria, at this time, is in part composed of the families that have descended from his most bitter persecutors. The ways of God, oh how unsearchable."

On Sunday evening, May 16, 1920, the author attended, by special invitation of the pastor, Rev. E. B. Jackson, D. D., a most interesting service in this historic church. In addition to a



TABLET IN ALEXANDRIA
BAPTIST CHURCH IN
MEMORY OF
JEREMIAH MOORE

delightful musical program by the choir, there were appropriate speeches by the following brethren: Dr. B. Cabell Henning, Dr. O. L. Hailey, Dr. H. W. Battle. The chief address of the occasion was a carefully prepared sketch of the life of Jeremiah Moore, by Rev. W. J. McGlothlin, D. D., of Greenville, South Carolina; and which was published in the *Religious Herald*. During this service an appropriately inscribed tablet was unveiled by Miss Florence S. Berryman, of Washington, D. C., to the memory of the founder of the church—Jeremiah Moore, the tablet being a gift of Hon. R. Walton Moore, of Washington, D. C., and containing the following inscription:

"IN MEMORY

OF

JEREMIAH MOORE

Baptist Pioneer Preacher and Leader. 1746-1815

Imprisoned in Alexandria several times for 'Preaching the gospel without license.' Tried in 1773 before Justice (Col.) Broadwater, and defended by Patrick Henry (the jail and courthouse stood on the present market square), and re-

leased. Founded the First Baptist Church, of Washington (1802); the First Baptist of Alexandria (1803), and the Second, of Washington (1810)."

On the printed program of that service this statement appeared:

"Jeremiah Moore was imprisoned in the Old Colonial Jail in Alexandria in 1773, by order of a Vestry of the Established Church of England, for preaching the Gospel. He was defended by Patrick Henry in these traditional words: 'Great God, gentlemen, a man in prison for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ'."

This church, "The First Baptist Church of Alexandria," had in 1938 a membership of 1,140. Great oaks from little acorns grow.

This intimate description of Elder Moore, written by William Wirt to his friend, Mr. Pope, may be found in John P. Kennedy's *Life of William Wirt* (1850), Vol. II, page 386:

"I have a great partiality for the Baptist. My first favorite preacher in early life was a Baptist. His name was Jerry Moore; and a powerful man he was. Not refined, but rough and strong, of copious and even impetuous volubility, keen, acute, witty, full of original observations, and, as a reasoner, I have seldom heard him surpassed. He was a most interesting preacher. He lived in Loudon County, Virginia, and used to come to the Seneca Church, or rather meeting-house, in Maryland, to preach'."

"A few days before his death he observed to his son,

"I have finished my course; the doctrines that I have tried to preach are the stay and comfort of my heart; I know in whom I have trusted. There is one thing, and only one, that gives me the least uneasiness, and that is, that I have not traveled more, preached more, and written more, and in all things been more industrious in the best of causes.'" (Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, First Series (1860), p. 220.)

Elder Jeremiah Moore died at his home place, "Moorefield," which is near Vienna and about five miles from Fairfax Court



GRAVEYARD OF JEREMIAH MOORE

House. His death occurred on February 23, 1815, and he was buried on his estate which remained in the possession of his descendants until a recent date. His last resting place has been enclosed by a concrete wall with a bronze tablet in the wall bearing the following inscription :

“Within This Inclosure Are Buried
The Reverend Jeremiah Moore, 1746-1815
and his wife
Lydia Renno Moore, 1745-1835
and some of
Their Children and Grand-Children.”

In the July, 1924, *Bulletin of the Crozer Theological Seminary*, Upland, Pennsylvania, pages 85-92, is “A Romantic Chapter of the Final Stages in the Baptist Contention for Religious Liberty,” by Reverend E. B. Jackson, D. D., which closes with the following paragraph :

“Before I close this chapter of Romance let me add that Moore was tried and released in 1773, and the very next year (1774), in the same Court House where he was tried, there was introduced, in a meeting of freeholders of Fairfax county, Washington presiding, a series of resolutions by the afterwards famous author of the ‘Bill of Rights,’ George Mason, in which the very *first reference* was made to the subject of *religious liberty*. Did not these great men remember Moore, the prisoner ‘for preaching the gospel’? In any case these ‘Fairfax County Resolves’ together with the ‘Bill of Rights’ became the treasure house from which was drawn material to carry on an agitation which, largely by the help of the Baptist, ultimated in the glorious first amendment to the Constitution, making religious liberty a blessed permanency.”

CHAPTER XIV

1774

BANKS, AMMON, DELANY, MAXWELL AND ELIJAH CRAIG
IMPRISONED IN CULPEPER COUNTY JAIL

ESSEX COUNTY

County Seat—Tappahannock

The Piscataway church located in Essex County, seven or eight miles southwest of Tappahannock, organized in 1774, and known as Mt. Zion since 1856, under this name still maintains a vigorous connection with the Rappahannock Association. This church was constituted on March 13, 1774, and on that memorable day "a warrant was issued to apprehend all the Baptist preachers that were at meeting. Accordingly John Waller, John Shackelford, Robert Ware and Ivison Lewis were taken and carried before a magistrate. Ivison Lewis was dismissed, not having preached in the county; the other three were sent to prison."

JOHN WALLER, JOHN SHACKELFORD, ROBERT WARE
*Imprisoned in Essex County Jail; John Waller Was
Imprisoned for Fourteen Days*

While in prison they employed their time in much the same manner as so many of their brethren had employed theirs under similar circumstances, yet they seem to have lacked the sweet comfort and consolation which usually attended such an experience. At least John Waller did not have a very pleasant season, or enjoy a sense of the divine presence:

"It appears from Mr. Waller's journals, which we have before us, that while in prison God permitted them to pass through divers and fiery trials; their minds, for a season, being greatly harrassed by the enemy of souls. They, however, from first to last of their imprisonment, preached twice a week, gave much godly advice to such as came to visit

them, read a great deal, and prayed almost without ceasing. In their stated devotion, morning, noon, and night, they were often joined by others. They continued in close confinement from the 13th to the 21st of March, which was court day. Being brought to trial, they were required to give bond and security for their good behavior for twelve months, or go back to prison." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 23.)

The Court's record of this case of imprisonment is found in Order Book Number 29, 1773-1783, pages 195 and 196:

"At a Court held for Essex County at Tappahannock on Monday the 21st day of March, in the year of our Lord 1774.

"Present his Majesty's Justices.

Thomas Roane	Robert Beverley and	Gentlemen.
John Upshaw	John Corrie	

"John Waller, Robert Ware and John Shackelford Anabaptist Preachers being brought before the Court by a warrant from under the hand of Archibald Ritchie, Gent. for preaching and expounding the scriptures contrary to law, and confessing the fact, it is ordered that they and each of them do give security in the sum of Twenty Pounds with two good and sufficient securities in the sum of Ten Pounds each for their good behaviour twelve months: And it is also ordered that they be forthwith committed to the Goal of this county there to remain the aforesaid term, unless they give such security.

"Whereupon the said Robert Ware acknowledged himself indebted to our Sovereign Lord the King his heirs and successors in the sum of twenty pounds current money, and Samuel Gresham and John Sorrell acknowledged themselves indebted in like manner in the sum of ten pounds each, to be levied on their respective goods and chattels, lands and tenements; on condition that if the said Ware shall be of good behaviour twelve months from this date, then this recognizance to be void, otherwise to remain and be in full force."

As the reference to Shackelford appears in a separate entry and on a different page on the same date and with the same Gentlemen Justices presiding, it is probable that he arranged for his bonds-

men at a later hour in the day thereby necessitating a separate entry, which is as follows :

“John Shackelford acknowledged himself indebted to our Sovereign Lord the King his heirs and successors in the sum of Twenty Pounds current money, and John Goode and Thoms. Upshaw acknowledged themselves indebted in like manner in the sum of Ten Pounds each to be levied on their respective goods and chattels, lands and tenements ; on condition that if the said John Shackelford shall be of good behaviour twelve months from this date then this recognizance to be void, otherwise to be and remain in full force.”

Having finished the account of what took place on Court Day, let us take up the case of these preachers individually, and in the order of their releasement.

JOHN SHACKELFORD

Imprisoned in Essex County Jail for Eight Days

This is the first, and it seems the only imprisonment of John Shackelford. He was born in Caroline County in 1750, began preaching in 1772, when twenty-two years of age, but not ordained until 1774, when he took charge of the Tuckahoe Church. Prior to his pastorate of the Tuckahoe Church, there had been violent opposition to the Baptists in that neighborhood, the parson of the parish preaching against them, and warrants being issued for the apprehension of Lewis Craig, Edward Herndon, Bartholomew Choning, James Goolrick, James Ware and James Pitman, all of whom were thrown into prison, as we have seen in a previous chapter. Just how John Shackelford managed to escape the clutches of the law, until the year that he was ordained and became the pastor of Tuckahoe, the record does not show. However, after being released from the Essex County jail he continued to serve this church (which had been in one of the storm centers of opposition), for eighteen years, or, until he left the State. In 1788 the Tuckahoe Church experienced a gracious revival and Mr. Shackelford baptized about three hundred. His reduced circumstances, with some other causes, led him to move to Kentucky in the year 1792, and John Taylor's *A History of the*

Ten Baptist Churches, Second Edition (1827), page 49, contains the following information relative to Shackelford in his new home:

"But to return to South Elkhorn, Lewis Craig continued their pastor, for perhaps nine years, and then moved to Bracken county, near the Ohio River. Having been well acquainted with John Shackelford, in Virginia, who had lately moved to Kentucky. Craig advised the Church, at South Elkhorn, to call him to take the watch care of the Church, which was done on Craig's moving away. I suppose Shackelford has been in the ministry at least 50 years, and was a prisoner of the Lord, in early times, in Virginia. He was a preacher of much respectability from his youth; and his labours commenced with great success before he came to Kentucky. He has been the laborious paster of South Elkhorn for more than thirty years. Under his ministrations, there have been great additions to the Church; several great revivals have been there. About the beginning of the present century, several hundred were added in one year. A few years past, near two hundred were added in one winter. So that South Elkhorn has always been among the most numerous and respectable Churches in Elkhorn association."

Then on page 50 of the same book John Taylor says:

"The Church at South Elkhorn has existed as such for near forty years; they have only had two pastors, Craig and Shackelford. Both these men have often preached through iron grates in Virginia, and with great success in Kentucky; and now both waiting to hear the applaudit of 'well done thou good and faithful servants'."

A footnote in Beale's *Semple*, page 156, tells the rest of his story that seems pertinent to this volume:

"Mr. Shackelford reached Kentucky about the time that Lewis Craig, his former associate in toils and sufferings, retired from the care of South Elk Horn church, and he was chosen as his successor, and he continued to serve in this relation for nearly forty years. His church, distracted by the Craig vs. Creath feud, and rent in twain by the Campbellite controversy, saddened his declining years. He died in 1829,

when 79 years of age, probably the last (says the historian of the Kentucky Baptists) of that noble band of preachers who were confined in Virginia jails for preaching the Gospel."

ROBERT WARE

Imprisoned in Essex County Jail for Eight Days

This Essex County imprisonment was Robert Ware's second experience as a prisoner of the Lord. He was a native of Middlesex County, was imprisoned at Urbanna for forty-six days, in 1771, John Waller being also in prison with him at the time.

Ware and his colleagues had petitioned the Middlesex County court to grant James Machan's house as a place for dissenters to worship, but the petition had been rejected because the court ruled that it had no authority to grant such a license. This was in June and their imprisonment in Middlesex jail commenced on August 10, 1771. From that time on Robert Ware was a "marked" man. The civil authorities had their eyes on him and were watching him closely, but there was another "Marksman," lurking in the background, whose dart was destined to bring him low. In the *Parish Register of Christ Church, Middlesex County, Virginia* (1897), page 220, there is this irrefutable evidence that Cupid's aim was true, and his arrow had pierced Robert Ware's heart:

"Robert Ware & Catherine Machan married July 22nd, 1773."

Robert Ware had been ordained on February 11, 1773, and he claimed his bride five months later. On the day he was ordained he became pastor of Lower King and Queen Church. But that little expert huntsman—Cupid—was not satisfied with one "dear" that year for he bagged another on that same day, and perhaps it was Robert's brother. Just above the reference to Robert Ware, in the same Parish Register, this entry occurs:

"James Ware & Jane Machan married July 22nd, 1773."

These two entries suggest the thought of a double wedding that day, and also that even in the midst of those dark days of persecution, the joy bells would occasionally ring out their glad refrain. "There is a silver lining to every cloud," and the very

fact that the Baptists were persecuted so unmercifully must have made those kindred spirits more interested in each other. At any rate it was no doubt a gladsome occasion when the bans were published of a double wedding, the brides-to-be being daughters, perhaps, of the very man whose home the authorities had refused to license as a place for dissenters to meet, and where the company of Baptist preachers had been arrested for preaching the Gospel.

Remember the old saying, "Faint heart never won fair lady," and a weak, cowardly, vacillating preacher never took possession of a promised land. It takes the Calebs and the Joshuas, men of undaunted faith and supreme courage, to win in the Christian race.

And it takes a man of superb courage to "possess his soul," to endure uncomplainingly the annoying and irritating insolence of drunken wretches, as Robert Ware did on at least one occasion, as we learn from Semple's *History* (1810), pages 19 and 20:

ROBERT WARE

Annoyed by Two Men Drinking and Playing Cards on the Stage Where He Preached

"On one occasion, when Robert Ware was preaching, there came one Davis and one Kemp, two sons of Belial, and stood before him with a bottle, and drank, offering the bottle to him, cursing him.—As soon as he closed his service, they drew out a pack of cards, and began to play on the stage where he had been standing, wishing him to reprove them, that they might beat him."

And Dr. Semple adds this footnote:

"It is worthy of note, that these two men both died soon after, ravingly distracted, each accusing the other of leading him into so detestable a crime."

Robert Ware died about 1804, but we have not been able to learn the place of his interment.

JOHN WALLER

The third and last preacher to be imprisoned in Essex County jail at this time was John Waller. Continuing Dr. Semple's account we learn how John Waller felt when left by his brethren,

the embarrassing situation in which it placed him, and also the manner in which he obtained his release:

"Ware and Shackelford gave bond and went home; Waller being always doubtful of the propriety of giving any bond whatever, determined to go back to jail. The trials of this man of God were now greater than ever. Deserted by his brethren, scoffed and persecuted by his enemies, locked up with a set of drunken, profane wretches, he had no alternative but to commit himself to the hands of Omnipotence, and wait his deliverance. After remaining in prison fourteen days, he gained his own consent to give bond, and go home."

The "divers and fiery trials" through which these men passed, and having their minds "greatly harassed by the enemy of souls," is but a natural outcome of the unpleasant circumstances in which they were placed. Gotthold says, "Our minds are like a lute, soon put out of tune. In fair weather it rings loud and clear; but let the weather change, and the sun of prosperity withdraw his beams, and hide himself behind dark clouds of trouble, and our courage vanishes and we give ourselves to dispondency."

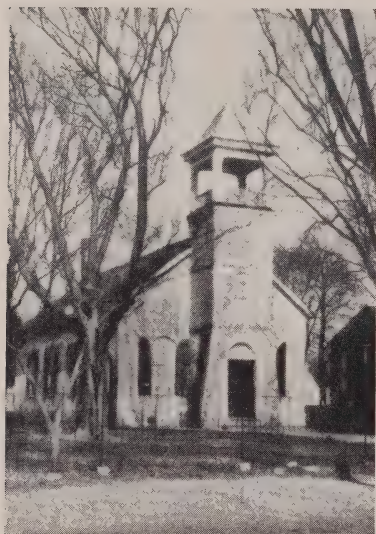
But God never forsakes his own. If he seems to turn away, as he did at the death of His Son, it is only for a time. "But it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." Mr. Robert Glover, one of the English martyrs, a little before his death, had lost the sense of God's favour which occasioned great heaviness and grief; but when he came within sight of the stake at which he was to suffer, he experienced such abundant comfort and heavenly joy, that, clapping his hands together, he cried out, 'He is come, he is come!' and died triumphantly." (John Whitecross's *Anecdotes* (1835), Vol. II, p. 243.)

JOHN WALLER

Imprisoned in Essex County Jail for Fourteen Days

This is the fourth and last imprisonment of John Waller for preaching the Gospel. He spent *one hundred and thirteen days* in four Colonial jails in Virginia; viz., Spotsylvania (43 days); Middlesex (46 days); Caroline (10 days); and Essex (14 days).

The trial of these three men—John Waller, John Shackelford and Robert Ware—took place at Tappahannock, the county seat of Essex. It is worthy of special notice that the old court-house



BEALE'S MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH
at Tappahannock, Virginia

before whose bar these godly men were arraigned as law-breakers, is still standing, an old brick Colonial structure, substantially built, but is now a Baptist Church. The walls of this building have the unique distinction of first resounding with condemnation proceedings against three men for preaching the Gospel and now they reverberate regularly with praise for that Gospel. Soon after the organization of the Centennial Baptist Church, the members bought this old building, which is located in the township of Tappahannock, remodeled it and fitted it up as a house of worship. When Rev. Frank B. Beale died in 1908, after serving this church twice as pastor, twenty-eight years altogether, the church held a Memorial Service in his honor, and at the same time changing the name to the "Beale Memorial Baptist Church." This service was held on August 30, 1908, at which time Mr. O. D. Marston read "A Brief History of Centennial Baptist Church," which was published September 11, 1908, in *The Tidewater Democrat*, and contains the following reference to this old court-house, which is now a Baptist Meeting-house:

"Soon after this church was organized our deacons A. R. Micou and Dr. W. C. Jeffries, purchased this property (our church) without a dollar in sight to pay the obligation. This house which was the Court House when this country was under the government of the Crown of England. This house in which John Waller, Robt. Ware and John Shackelford, Baptist ministers were brought before the court by a warrant for preaching and expounding the scriptures contrary to law and required to give bond and security for their good behaviour twelve months. Failing to do this they were sent to jail to serve out that term.

"This old building should ever stand in the hearts and minds of all people who love and stand for soul liberty and freedom of conscience as a monument erected by our God for man's good and God's glory."

When liberated from the Essex County jail, John Waller continued in a "bright and shining way" and for many years had the ministerial care of five churches, to which he preached stately. His zeal and popularity continued unabated until he was led into Arminianism and being for a season estranged from his brethren, during which time he declared that he suffered much "leanness of soul." He was fully re-instated into fellowship with his brethren in 1787, and continuing his ministry in Virginia until November 8th, 1793, when "after taking the most affectionate farewell of the churches, he moved his family to Abbeville district, in the State of South Carolina."

W. B. Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*, page 116 gives the following reasons for Waller's removal from Virginia:

"This removal is said to have been induced partly by economical considerations, and partly from the desire of himself and wife to live near a beloved daughter, who had some time before been married to the Rev. Abraham Marshall of Georgia."

Mr. H. L. Watson, the editor of *The Index-Journal*, of Greenwood, South Carolina, near where John Waller settled, thinks there were probably three reasons for Waller's leaving Virginia, namely:

"1. He felt that his work as a minister in Virginia was over.

"2. Good lands could be bought cheap in South Carolina and thousands were selling out in Virginia and removing to both Carolinas, the new lands in Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee. * * * Upper part of South Carolina was almost entirely peopled by immigrants from Virginia before the Revolution and ties of blood drew others after the Revolution.

"3. John Waller had a married daughter in this section, said to be his favorite daughter, wife of the Rev. Abraham Marshall, also a Baptist minister. He was a son of the famous Daniel Marshall, Baptist minister."

Waller's labours in his new home were also blessed but not to a great extent. He is credited with establishing several churches in his adopted State, the first one being constituted the year after his removal from Virginia. This church is described in the *Triennial Baptist Register*, No. 2 (1836), page 187, as follows:

"This church, Betharbra, Laurens District, was constituted in 1794, by Richard Shackelford, David Lilly and John Waller, consisting of 44 members. Previously to its constitution there were a number of Baptists who had removed from other states and settled in this neighborhood, and others had been baptized by John Waller before any other church had been constituted. It was his practice to go from house to house exhorting the people and preaching the doctrine of repentance and baptism. Those who believed and gave satisfactory evidence of a change of heart were immersed by him wherever there was water convenient. Thus were the materials of Betharbra church prepared. John Waller first served the church in the office of pastor, but was soon succeeded by Henry Witt, who was ordained by John Waller and David Lilly.

"A commodious house of worship was built by subscription and was open to all denominations of Christians, but for sometime it has been occupied only by the Baptist. It is beautifully situated on the head spring of Banks Creek, a branch of Saluda River."

The other church constituted by John Waller, of which he was pastor at the time of his death, was Siloam Baptist Church, and Mr. H. L. Watson, the editor of *The Index-Journal*, of Greenwood, South Carolina, not only a Baptist but greatly interested in our Baptist history has with great care copied the first two pages in the minute book of this old church for this volume, and they read as follows:

"THE BAPTIST CHURCH AT SILOAM
Constituted

June 29 1799	Agreeable to the petition of us the undernamed subscribers who are desirous to become a Constituted Church for the better convenience of keeping the worship and discipline of the Church of Christ."
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"The Brethren, David Lilley, Rev. John Waller, William Chiles, Meschec Oberby, attended as a Presbytery for the aforesaid purpose and after deliberately considering the petition found it expedient to constitute us a Church being in number thirty-two to be called Siloam Church.

Rev. Jno. Waller.....	dead	1
Charles Fooche	Excommnd	2
John Ball.....	dead	3
Nancy Ball	dead	4
Benj. Waller.....	dead	5
Joanna Waller	Dis'd.....	6
John N. Waller	dead	7
Martha Nicholas	dead	8
Phebe Turrett.....	dist	9
Calbern Wright	dist	10
Elizabeth Wright.....	dist	11
Mary Gains.....	dead	12
Peggy Gains.....	dist	13
Tabitha Kemp	dist	14
David Gains.....	dist	15
Old Sister Drummond.....	Dead.....	16
Peter Ball.....	dist	17
Delilah Ball.....	dis't	18
Daniel Trussell.....	"	19
Elizabeth M. Waller.....	"	20
Patterson Pulliam	dead	21
Benjamin Drummond.....	dead	22
Ann Conner.....	dism't	23
Dorotha Waller	dead	24
John Waller's Negro Abram.....	Excom	25
Do do do Isballa.....	dead	26
Keelson Smith's Dick.....	dead	27
Jas. Watson's Delpha.....	Excom	28
A. Turner's Dinah.....	des't	29

"The church then proceeded to the choice of a Minister and chose the Rev. John Waller, occasional Pastor on the same day.

"July 7th. Received to baptism Lucy Watson and Leonard Waller's negro Lucy.

"August 1st. Excommunicate Bro. Waller's Jim for the sin of adultery.

"Oct. 13th 1800. Received by letter Sarah Drummond.

"Jan. 12th (1801?) received by letter Robert Cheatham and Frances Cheatham and dismissed Tabitha Kemp.

"April. Meeting dismissed Clabern Wright, Elizabeth Wright and Daniel Trussel and excommunicated Brother Ben Waller's Clary and Violet.

"May. Meeting received by letter Abednago Turner.

"June. Meeting dismissed Bro. Peter Ball and Delilah Ball.

"First Sunday in Sept. Received to baptism Larkin Reynolds and Permelia Waller.

"Nov. 8th. Resolves of the Siloam Church. 1st the members to take into consideration the choosing two Lay Elders the Saturday before the second Sunday in December, next also the Lord's Supper to be administered the day following. Second, Church meeting to be held every other month at Siloam and every other month at Mount Garrison and for the Lord's Supper to be administered once a quarter at each place. The Brethren to find the wine at each place in rotation. Also the members to take into consideration a plan at our next meeting for the furnishing a table and other necessary articles for the same act in a decent manner.

"Nov. 9th. Received by letter Sarah Pulliam.

"July 4th 1802. The Rev. John Waller died."

And then Mr. Watson states that:

"The above is a verbatim copy of pages one and two of the minutes of Siloam church. Nothing has been left out. There is no further mention of the Rev. John Waller and no reference to him or his work.

"It will be noticed that there is a skip between Nov. 9th (1801) and July 4th 1802, date of the death of John Waller. There was evidently nothing to record.

"The next entry after the death of John Waller is 1803, no month or day, and it is one sentence. 'The church took the Rev. Arthur Williams as a supply'."

Here we have the statement from the Minute Book, of the last church John Waller served as pastor, that he died on "July 4th, 1802," in the sixty-second year of his age and a minister of God's word for about thirty-five years.

William Cathcart's *The Baptist Encyclopedia* (1881), Vol. II, page 1206, gives this closing scene of Elder Waller's life, and a brief summary of that wonderful career:

"His last sermon, at the funeral of a young man, was from Zech. 11:4: 'Run, speak to that young man.' He addressed the young in feeble, touching strains, saying that it was his last sermon. He spoke until his strength quite failed, and then tottered to a bed, from which he was carried home, and died July 4, 1802, in his sixty-second year.

"He preached thirty-five years baptized more than 2000 persons, assisted in ordaining twenty-seven ministers, and in constituting eighteen churches, and lay one hundred and thirty-two days in four different jails, and he was repeatedly scourged in Virginia. He now rests from his labors, and his works followed him."

The buffetings, stripes and reproaches which he had to bear in Virginia were perhaps harder to endure than the jail sentences. But he did a noble work and even in his newly adopted State we have already seen that he constituted two churches—Betharbra and Siloam.

The following is the testimony of a distinguished pioneer Methodist minister in Virginia, who knew John Waller intimately:

"Philip Gatch, who labored this year, 1776 in Hanover, gives a brief account of it in his memoirs: 'My circuit was very large. It lay on both sides of James River and was a part of six counties. But it appeared like a new world of grace. The Baptists, who preceded us, had encountered and rolled back the waves of persecution. Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall, who were the first fruits of George Whitefield's labors in the East, had become Baptist, members of the separate order. They travelled extensively through the State, and others, through their instrumentality, were raised up, and became faithful and zealous ministers and they endured a great deal of persecution. John Waller, with whom I became intimate, was an American in sentiment, a good preacher, and suffered much for the cause. He was confined in jail, first and last, one hundred and thirteen days, in different counties.'" (From *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*, by Rev. W. W. Bennett (Second Edition), Richmond, 1871, pp. 95-96.)

Following our general plan of trying to locate the last resting place of these old heroes of the cross, the author began to cast about for Waller's grave, and fortunately located an article in the *Religious Herald*, of October 3, 1872, which finally led to its discovery. This letter published sixty-six years ago is as follows:

"JOHN WALLER'S GRAVE—HIS RELATIONS, &C.

"We, of the Abbeville county, S. C., were much interested in J. L. B.'s article on this worthy man. Only three weeks before it appeared, a company of his descendents assembled at his grave to erect a tombstone over his remains. This meeting took place on the 4th of July, 1872, just seventy years from the day of his death. Several of his descendents live in this county. The nearest of kin is a grand daughter, Mrs. Amelia Crews, of Greenwood, S. C. At the same place resides a great grandson, C. A. C. Waller, a young man of promise, a graduate of Furman University, a hearty Baptist, and active worker in his church and church school. A younger great grandson, C. G. Waller, though of a manly and generous nature, as yet bears more resemblance to his ancestor in the joviality of his earlier years than the piety of later life. From the two first named persons can be obtained more information respecting Mr. Waller than from any one else in this section.

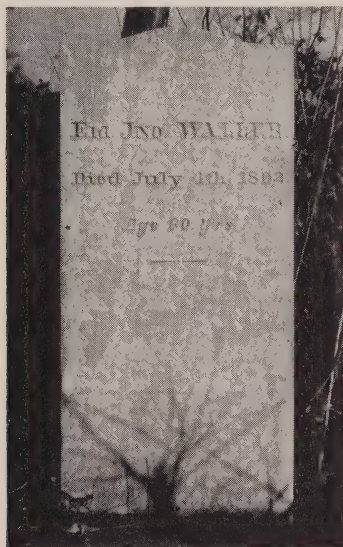
W. B. Jones."

Phoenix, S. C.



CIRCLE INDICATES WALLER'S GRAVE NEAR GREENWOOD, S. C.

After much correspondence with different individuals over the South, the author of this volume learned that the Minute Book of the Siloam Baptist Church, in South Carolina, was in the vaults of the Connie Maxwell Orphanage at Greenwood, South Carolina, and an appeal was then made to Dr. A. T. Jamison, Superintendent and Treasurer of that institution, for help. He very readily consented and also enlisted the services of Mr. H. L. Watson,



ELDER JOHN WALLER'S GRAVE STONE
in South Carolina

from whom several quotations have already been included in this work. In a letter to Dr. Jamison (which was forwarded to the author), Mr. Watson gives these interesting paragraphs concerning Waller's Grave:

"The Rev. John Waller is buried in the Waller-Hackett family burying ground about six miles southeast of Greenwood on lands now owned by Dan B. Vines, on the Cambridge road between Greenwood and Ninety Six. Strange to say these lands at one time were owned by Furman University in Greenville, having had to buy them in on a foreclosure of a mortgage, but in reselling them the University might have reserved the burying ground, about a quarter of

an acre but probably no one there knew Waller was buried on the place.

"The place is grown up with bushes now. The late C. A. C. Waller used to have it cleaned off at his own expense every year. The grave of Rev. John Waller is marked with a substantial white marble slab with this Inscription:

ELDER JOHN WALLER

DIED JULY 4TH, 1802

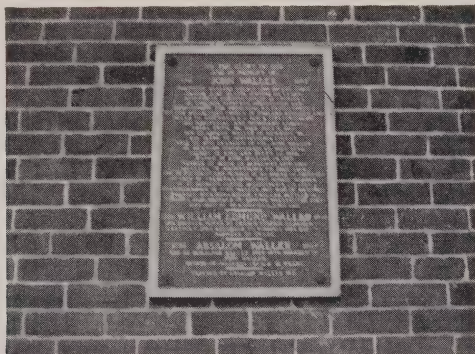
AGED 60 YEARS.

"The grave was first marked with a large piece of soapstone so the late C. A. C. Waller said. In 1872, the Rev. W. B. Jones, a very active and progressive minister raised a fund of about fifty dollars and bought the present marker. The location of the grave was attested by elderly persons who had known of its location. To be doubly sure, the spot was opened and the bones of a man found so that the testimony of the elderly persons was corroborated to that extent.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) H. L. Watson."

TABLET TO JOHN WALLER'S MEMORY ON
WALLER'S BAPTIST CHURCH

On September 9, 1931, a tablet was unveiled at a Memorial Service held during one of the sessions of the Goshen Baptist Association in Waller's Baptist Church, Spotsylvania County, Virginia.



TABLET ON WALLER'S BAPTIST CHURCH



WALLER'S BAPTIST CHURCH

Professor R. E. E. Harkness, of Crozer Theological Seminary, Chester, Pennsylvania, delivered the principal address, in which he said:

"I am very happy to participate in the delightful and pleasant ceremony of unveiling this tablet in memory of John Waller. It is altogether proper and fitting that such a service should be held and such a lasting tribute paid to these leaders of a century gone. As Baptists and Americans we should be grateful to the present Mr. Absalom Waller for his interest in his forebears and this gift which he has made to their memory, for the Waller church and the Waller family have made a very permanent and valuable contribution, not only to the honor of Baptist, but also to those principles held dear by all civilized mankind. John Waller, especially, was one of that heroic number who a century or more ago

fought the great battles of religious liberty, freedom of conscience and separation of Church and State and paid the Baptist price of that freedom which we enjoy today."

Then after recounting a brief page of Baptist history on the continent of Europe and America with reference to religious freedom, Professor Harkness continued:

"But it was in Virginia that the supreme battles were fought. Hawks, the celebrated Episcopalian historian frankly states that the Baptists were the leaders in the conflict and were resolutely set on overthrowing the established order and on winning their complete equality and rights. John Leland had come from New England to have himself elected to the Virginia Assembly that there he might fight the battles more successfully.

"But most conspicuous among them all was John Waller, the first pastor of this church (Waller's). The established clergy looked upon him as the leader of the dissenters and the chief disturber of the peace. He had always been a strong character. Before his conversion he was the ring-leader in the gang of young bloods who played their pranks in that frontier community. So hostile was he to all things religious that he was accorded the nickname Swearing John Waller. And it was as such, a leader of the jury to try Lewis Craig, a Baptist preacher, that he was converted in 1767. Being baptized he immediately began his own ministerial work, going far and wide on his preaching tours, and soon, like Paul of old, he was the most conspicuous and powerful preacher among those whom he had once persecuted. The established authorities of the Church and State determined that they must silence him."

Then Prof. Harkness recited Waller's Spotsylvania imprisonment, etc., and continued:

"But Hon. John Blair, the Deputy Governor, was more complimentary. There was little difference, he thought between these Baptists and the Anglicans in things they believed. But, said he, 'If a man of theirs is idle, and neglects to labor and to provide for his family as he ought, he incurs their censures which have had good effects. If this is their behavior, it were to be wished we had some of it among us.'

That is a commendation which any one of us, even to this day, might well desire.

"In 1769, when Wallers church was constituted, John Waller was chosen pastor and the following year was ordained. He continued that pastorate for over twenty years, until 1793, when he moved to Abbeville, S. C. But all this time he continued his extension work far and wide. I find nineteen churches throughout this section which he himself founded or aided in founding.

"But there are other considerations for which John Waller was noted and make him worthy of our undying memorials. In 1774 he helped ordain Samuel Harris bishop of the Southern Association and that same year he himself, together with Elisha Craig, was appointed bishop of this Northern or Goshen Association. One of the very few American Baptist 'bishops.'

* * * * *

"And what a victory was won in 1799, four years before his death, July 4, 1802. What great achievements and what marvelous changes had been crowded into those brief sixty-one years."

The "Elisha" Craig mentioned above is no doubt intended for "Elijah" Craig, the brother of Lewis and Joseph Craig.

1774

CHARLES CITY COUNTY

County Seat—Charles City

CHARLES CITY CHURCH OR EMMAUS CHURCH

Sustained Much Opposition But No Personal Violence

Charles City Church "is in the county of the same name, and was raised by the labors of Elijah Baker and Joseph Anthony, who first began their service in this neighborhood about the year 1774. They at first sustained much opposition, but no personal violence." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 112.)

In 1833 this church was moved into New Kent County, the name changed to Emmaus, and so continues as a member of the Dover Baptist Association.

Year Unknown
CULPEPER COUNTY
County Seat—Culpeper

The exact number of our brethren who were honored by the Culpeper authorities with a jail sentence can not now be stated with any degree of accuracy, as all the Order Books of that county, prior to the year 1798, have been destroyed. In previous chapters of this volume there have been noticed the various accounts with reference to the following ministers who were imprisoned in that county—James Ireland, Nathaniel Saunders and William McClannahan. But there were six others—three preachers and three laymen who suffered in the same way—making nine. Then by accepting the mere statement about John Corbley and John Picket being among those confined in Culpeper jail, without being able to give any of the details of their imprisonment, and including them in the list it would make *eleven men*—eight preachers and three laymen that are known to have been imprisoned in the Culpeper jail. How many more there were is not known, but it seems clear that there were others and that more men were imprisoned in Culpeper County than in any other county in the State. Caroline County came next with *nine* imprisonments, Chesterfield followed with *seven*, Orange with *six or more*, Spotsylvania *five*, Middlesex *four*, Essex *three*, and all the other counties that imprisoned our preachers with fewer than that.

But to return to the Culpeper cases, it is to be regretted exceedingly, that owing to the destruction of the Culpeper Order Books it is impossible to give the court records to show when these men were imprisoned, or how long they remained in jail. It is to Mr. James Madison, the eminent statesman—Father of our Constitution and twice President of the United States—whose home was in Orange County, that we are indebted for incidentally remarking in a letter on January 24, 1774, to his friend and college mate, William Bradford, Jr., of Philadelphia, that at *that time* there were “five or six” men imprisoned in an adjoining county, which presumably was Culpeper. A brief quotation from his letter has been given, but the whole paragraph bears so directly upon the subject in hand that it is deemed worthy a place within these pages. It shows conclusively that Mr. Madison had gone deeply

into the subject, that he had discovered the root of the whole matter, and therefore he boiled over in his righteous indignation at such outrageous proceedings. This letter has been preserved in Rives' *Life and Times of James Madison* (1866), Second Edition, Vol. I, page 43, and is as follows:

"I verily believe the frequent assaults that have been made on America (Boston especially) will in the end prove of real advantage. If the Church of England had been established and general religion in all the Northern colonies, as it has been among us here, and uninterrupted harmony had prevailed throughout the continent, it is clear to me that slavery and subjection might and would have been gradually insinuated among us. Union of religious sentiments begets a surprising confidence, and ecclesiastical establishments tend to great ignorance and corruption, all of which facilitates the execution of mischievous projects. * * * I want again to breathe your free air. I expect it will mend my constitution and confirm my principles. I have, indeed, as good an atmosphere at home as the climate will allow, but have nothing to brag of as to the state and liberty of my country. Poverty and luxury prevail among all sorts; pride, ignorance, and knavery among the priesthood; and, vice and wickedness among the laity. This is bad enough; but it is not the worst I have to tell you. That diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some; and, to their eternal infamy, the clergy can furnish their quota of imps for such purposes. There are, at present in the adjacent county not less than five or six well-meaning men in close jail for publishing their religious sentiments, which, in the main, are very orthodox. I have neither patience to hear, talk, or think of anything relative to this matter; for I have squabbled and scolded, abused and ridiculed so long about it, to little purpose, that I am without common patience. So I must beg you to pity me, and pray for liberty of conscience to all."

A footnote in Beale's *Senate* (1894), page 382, may refer to this same time. It states that:

"James Madison, in a letter to James Monroe, mentioned the imprisonment of six Baptist preachers at the same time in the adjacent county (Culpeper) jail."

This writer has been unable to locate this letter to James Monroe.

Now who were these "five or six" men who Mr. Madison says were languishing in the gaol of Culpeper County on January 24, 1774? The answer cannot be made with certainty. Perhaps Thomas Ammon was one of them, and, it is likely that the three men, an exhorter and two laymen, who were implicated in the same crime with him were incarcerated at the same time; and we think it probable that there may have been three more. Then we know that there were others who appeared in court along with Elijah Craig, at one of his trials in Culpeper, for Dr. Semple says: "At court, he, *with others*, was arraigned." Anderson Moffett was another preacher imprisoned there, the date of which is unknown. Now, if we be permitted, without having any direct authority for so doing, to place these six men on the list as *probably* those who were imprisoned in Culpeper at the time Mr. Madison wrote, we shall perhaps not be very far wrong.

THOMAS AMMON

Imprisoned in Culpeper County Jail; Duration of Imprisonment Unknown

We deplore the fact that only brief statements can be given of these men, and their experiences, at this late date. Thomas Ammon, who afterwards became a useful and valuable minister in Kentucky, may have been one of those imprisoned at this time. Semple's *History* (1810), page 176, says that Thomas Ammon was a ministerial son of the Crooked Run church in Culpeper County, and that he "was once imprisoned in Culpeper jail, for preaching."

In *A History of the Ten Baptist Churches*, by John Taylor, Second Edition (1827), page 102, the author tells about the awakening of a niece of the Craigs by the preaching of Thomas Ammon out in Kentucky, and then adds:

"Thomas Ammon, always a mighty son of thunder; he had been a great practical sinner, his conversion was as visible as his wickedness had been; he began to preach in the time of persecution in Virginia, was honored as many others were, with a place in Culpeper prison, for the testimony of his divine master; he died some years past in Kentucky."

THOMAS MAXFIELD, ADAMS BANKS, JOHN DELANEY

*Imprisoned in Culpeper County; Duration
of Imprisonment Unknown*

Within the bounds of the Rappadan church, "when the gospel was first preached there, persecution ran high. Warrants were issued to apprehend the preachers. E. Craig was taken out of the pulpit, and committed to Culpeper jail. Thomas Maxfield some time after, was imprisoned for exhorting. Mr. Adam Banks, about the same time, was committed to jail for praying in the private house of Mr. John Delaney, and Mr. Delaney himself, who was not a Baptist, for permitting it." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 181.)

No other facts have thus far appeared about the man who prayed, or the man who permitted it. But their hearts were evidently right towards God. Great heavens! The authorities must have reached a point of desperation. Imprison a man for "praying in a private house" and the owner for "permitting it"? Punish a child for looking up into his father's face and pleading for something he desired? Imprison the disciple for crying, "Abba Father"? Surely the lines had not fallen unto these humble followers of the Lord, in pleasant places. It is to be hoped that this effort to smother the flickering flames on the family altar was not successful, but that the same spirit that was found in a poor native of Jamaica was in the hearts of these Culpeper christians, and that they kept on "praying."

John Whitecross's *Anecdotes*, Vol. II, pages 205 and 206, gives this story of that poor native of Jamaica:

"Some time ago, a law was passed in the house of Assembly at Kingston, which contained several clauses highly injurious to the missionary cause in Jamaica. No time was lost in carrying its oppressive enactments into effect. A Wesleyan missionary was thrown into prison for the alledged 'crime' of preaching till after eight o'clock in the evening. Two persons connected with the congregation at Montegao Bay, had their homes levelled with the ground—their feet made fast in the stocks—and were sent in chains to the work-house, charged with the heinous offence of praying to the God of heaven. One of them proved so incorrigible, that they were obliged to give him up in despair. Having nothing

to do besides in the jail, he spent his time—morning, noon, and night—in singing, and in calling upon God; which so annoyed the jailer, that he repeatedly went into his cell and beat him, till at length the jailer brought him again before the court for this sin. The man, however, resolutely declared his purpose to pray. 'If you let me go,' said he, 'me will pray—if you keep me in prison, me will pray—if you flog me, me will pray; pray me must, and pray me will!' The jailer was fairly confounded; and, rather than be annoyed any longer by this 'praying fellow,' he gave up his fees, and a part of the fine was remitted; and so the man was dismissed to go and pray elsewhere."

THOMAS MAXFIELD OR THOMAS MAXWELL
*Imprisoned in Culpeper County Jail; Duration
 of Imprisonment Unknown*

The only reference to Thomas Maxfield in Semple's *History* is the brief sentence in connection with the Rappadan church: "Thomas Maxfield some time after, was imprisoned for exhorting." Dr. Chas. F. James' *Struggle for Religious Liberty in Virginia*, page 20, states that:

"According to Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* there were confined in Culpeper jail at different times—James Ireland, John Corbeley, Elijah Craig, Thomas Ammon, Adam Banks and Thomas Maxfield."

Dr. Geo. W. Beale's article in the *Religious Herald* of June 8, 1899, under the heading "Baptist Beginnings in Virginia," states that James Ireland was imprisoned in Culpeper jail, and then adds:

"Others among the early Baptists who were confined in this jail for preaching the gospel without license, or abetting the same, were Elijah Craig, Nathaniel Saunders, William McClannahan, John Corbley, Thomas Ammon, Anthony Moffett, John Picket, Adams Banks, Thomas Maxfield and John Dulaney."

As far as we have been able to discover, all our Virginia historians who have referred to this hero of the cross speak of

him as Maxfield, and Thomas Maxwell has never been listed by them as one of those who were imprisoned in the Virginia jails for preaching the gospel. Dr. Semple does not even mention him, yet the conviction grows that it was *Maxwell* and *not* Maxfield, who went to jail for conscience's sake, and for the following reasons:

1. Thomas Maxwell was an early Clerk of the Rapidan church.

2. Thomas Maxwell is mentioned repeatedly by our Georgia historians as being one of those who suffered imprisonment in Virginia for preaching the Gospel.

When or how long Thomas Maxwell served as Clerk of the Rapidan church is not known as the first eight pages of the oldest *Minute Book* of the church have been destroyed, but on page 9, is the record of a business meeting, dated July 31, 1790, Thomas Maxwell being the Clerk and Elder George Eve the Moderator. George Eve grew up in this church, was ordained its pastor on September 6, 1775, serving as such for twenty-one years, or, until he removed to the State of Kentucky. He served other churches also at various times and was generally the Moderator of the Culpeper Association as long as he was in Virginia.

Thomas Maxwell may have been the Clerk of the Rapidan church during the major part of George Eve's administration, as he signed all the minutes of the church which appear on pages 9 to 18, 1790-92. The minutes recorded on the 17th and 18th pages besides containing the statement that at this meeting Thomas Maxwell was granted a "letter of recommendation and also a letter of dismission," and that a new Clerk was appointed to take his place, are so interesting otherwise that they are given in full:

"At a church meeting, March 17, 1792, Brethren Wm. Mason & James Garnett came at the church's request.

"1—Bro. William Standley brought complaint against Bro. Charles Cooks for drinking too much, he being absent, appointed Bro. Jarrell to cite him to attend next church meeting to answer the complaint.

"2—Bro. Matthew McDaniel brought complaint against Wm. Tate for some disorderly behavior appointed Bro.

Learner Watson to cite him to next church meeting to answer the complaint.

"3—Granted to Bro. Thomas Maxwell a letter of recommendation and also a letter of dismissal for himself and wife and likewise for his children, who are members of this church.

"4—The church, with the helps in conjunction proceeded to the business of the Eldership and finding Joseph Eddens and Jeremiah Kirtley willing with the desire of the church to be ordained Elders for them, the Presbytery prayed for them, with laying on of hand in the name of the Lord.

"5—Granted to Bro. Jacob Furnace a letter of dismissal, also granted to Bro. Thomas Furnace & wife, and Sister Mary Bolen letters of dismissal—appointed Thomas Maxwell to write them.

"6—Appointed Bro. John Leatherer, clerk of this church in the room of Thomas Maxwell.

Thomas Maxwell C. C.

Geo. Eve, Mod."

Thomas Maxwell moved to Elbert County, Georgia, and in 1793 we find him taking part in the ordination of a preacher, according to J. H. Campbell's *Georgia Baptists—Historical and Biographical* (1874), page 179:

WM. DAVIS' ORDINATION

"In 1788, he was licensed to preach the gospel, while yet in his native state (Virginia) and was ordained in Georgia by Dozier Thornton and Thomas Maxwell in 1793."

In 1795 Thomas Maxwell was a member of the presbytery that constituted the Holly Springs Baptist Church, according to J. S. Christian's *Historical Sketch in the Minutes of the Henron Association* (Georgia), 1900:

"Holly Springs Church is situated in the extreme north western portion of Elbert County Georgia. Probably the third oldest church in Elbert Co. having been first organized as an arm of Dove's Creek, on May the 9th 1795 and on Feb. 6th 1795 was constituted with twenty one members and declared to be an independent church by a presbytery consisting of John Cleveland, John White and Thomas Maxwell."

From this same Historical Sketch we learn that Rev. John Doss filled out the first year of this church, 1795, followed by Rev. Thomas Maxwell who served it thirty years.

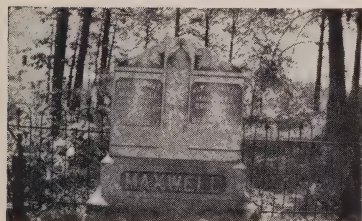
The *History of the Baptist Churches of Georgia*, compiled by *The Christian Index*, page 364, contains this reference to Thomas Maxwell:

"Simeon Maxwell, son of Benson and Elizabeth J. Maxwell moved to Talbot Co. in 1833 from Elberton—Simeon is the great, grand son of Thomas Maxwell, who was a Baptist preacher in the days of persecution in Virginia—who was taken from the pulpit and thrust into prison for preaching the gospel of the son of God. He moved to Elbert Co. Ga. in the early settling of the County and died when 97 years of age."

And J. H. Campbell's *Baptist History*, page 161, contains this:

"Rev. Thomas Maxwell was born in Virginia and was a prisoner during the reign of persecution. He preached much thru the gates of his prison and in his anxiety to see his congregation, bruised his nose against the iron bars until it would bleed. He settled in Elbert County, Georgia, and had charge of Changie and Hendrys Churches. He died in 1837, aged 97."

Thomas Maxwell and Mary Pemberton Maxwell, his wife (whom he married in Virginia in 1761), are buried in the old



MAXWELL MONUMENT
Elbert County, Georgia



THOMAS MAXWELL'S
BIBLE
Being Preserved by
the Family

Maxwell cemetery in Centerville District, Elbert County, between Elberton and Hartwell, Georgia. Their graves have been marked by present day descendants with a double granite tombstone, a picture of which and also of Thomas Maxwell's Bible are included in this volume.

The inscription on this gravestone is as follows:

Rev. Thomas Maxwell	Mary Pendleton Maxwell
Börn	Born
Sept. 8, 1742	1744
Died	Died
Dec. 12, 1837	Dec. 18, 1827
Maxwell	

Attention is called to the name "Pendleton" on the gravestone. Members of the family claim that this is an error and the name should be "Pemberton."

ELIJAH CRAIG

*Imprisoned in Culpeper Jail Twice; Duration of One
Imprisonment Was One Month; Duration of
Other Imprisonment Is Unknown*

Elijah Craig was one of the heroes of the cross who suffered incarceration in Culpeper jail. Semple's *History* (1810), page 415, tells of his arrest and trial:

"They sent the Sheriff and posse after him, when at the plough. He was taken and carried before three magistrates of Culpeper. They, without hearing arguments pro or con, ordered him to jail. At court, he, with others, was arraigned. One of the lawyers told the court, they had better discharge them; for that oppressing them, would rather advance, than retard them. He said, they were like a bed of camomile; the more they were trod, the more they would spread. The court thought otherwise, and determined to imprison them. Some of the court were of opinion that they ought to be confined in a close dungeon; but the majority were for giving them the bounds. Mr. Craig says they were fed on rye bread and water, to the injury of their health. After staying there one month, preaching to all who came, he gave bond for good behaviour, and came out."

This same account is found in Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), First Series, pages 65 and 66; and also in Benedict's *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, pages 291 and 292, with the exception of the reference to his having been fed on "rye bread and water." This omission, we take it, was purely an oversight.

From the above statement it is clear that Elijah Craig was taken by the sheriff and a posse "when at the plough." From the same authority, Semple's *History*, page 180, we are told that on one occasion he was "taken out of the pulpit, and committed to Culpeper jail." This would seem to prove that he was in that gaol on at least two separate occasions.

Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, First Series (1860), page 66, gives this intimate sketch of Elijah Craig, by one who knew him well:

"Elijah Craig was considered the greatest preacher of the three brothers; and in a very large Association in Virginia, Elijah Craig was among the most popular for a number of years. His preaching was of the most solemn style—his appearance as a man who had just come from the dead, of a delicate habit, a thin visage, large eyes and mouth, of great readiness of speech, the sweet melody of his voice, both to preach and sing, bore all down before it; and when his voice was extended it was like the loud sound of a trumpet. The great fervor of his preaching commonly brought many tears from the hearers, and many no doubt were turned to the Lord by his preaching. He was not as great a peacemaker in the church as his brother Lewis, and that brought trouble on him; but from all his troubles he was relieved by death, when perhaps he did not much exceed sixty years of age, after serving the ministry, say forty years."

Where Elijah Craig was buried, and whether or not his grave is marked are two pieces of information which Virginia Baptists would love to have concerning this gifted, loved and useful servant of the lord, but thus far they have been denied them.

Dr. George W. Beale's article in the *Religious Herald*, on June 8, 1899, entitled "Baptist Beginnings in Virginia," says that John Picket was one of those imprisoned in Culpeper jail, but gives no

authority for the statement. John Picket was imprisoned in Fauquier, as has been seen and it is not at all improbable that he was also one of those confined in the Culpeper jail, for he labored much in that county.

Another newspaper notice, which is an unsigned and undated clipping, but which evidently is from the *Religious Herald*, contains some facts about Elder Anderson Moffett, and mentions John Koontz as one of those who suffered with Anderson Moffett and James Ireland. Now we know that the last two preachers were confined in Culpeper jail, but beyond the simple statement above, there seems to be no proof that John Koontz was imprisoned there although he may have been.

It is a source of regret that the length of time that each one of these preachers and laymen had to remain in prison is not known nor the terms upon which they secured their freedom in most cases. Elijah Craig gave bond on one occasion and came out after a month's imprisonment. One preacher obtained his liberty in a peculiar and unusual manner, as the following quotation will prove:

"French Strother made himself very popular by releasing a Baptist minister who had been imprisoned by a Justice of the Peace, by substituting his man Tom in his place and letting him out at night. That fact is stated on the authority of Capt. P. Slaughter, who married his daughter." (From Rev. Philip Slaughter's *A History of St. Mark's Parish*, p. 170.)

ANDERSON MOFFETT

Smith's Creek church in Shenandoah County was highly favored by the divine mercy in having two stalwart preachers—James Ireland and Anderson Moffett—among their members. Elder Moffett took care of the church two years after its constitution and retained that position for full fifty years. "Mr. Moffett from the time of his first entry upon the ministry, until this time," says Dr. Semple's *History* (1810), page 100, "has been a steady, pious and useful minister of the gospel."

The following tribute to him appeared in the *Religious Herald*, under the heading:

ANDERSON MOFFETT

*Imprisoned in Culpeper County Jail; Duration
of Imprisonment Unknown*

"ONE OF THE FATHERS"

"Elder Anderson Moffett, died at his residence in Rockingham county, Va., May 14, 1835, aged eighty-eight years eight months and sixteen days. He was born in Fauquier county, made a profession of religion and joined the Baptist church when but a youth. He preached the gospel more than seventy years. And at the time when that denomination was violently opposed and persecuted, he was, with other ministers, imprisoned in Culpeper county, for the word of God and testimony of Jesus. Both before and a long time after his confinement in jail he travelled and preached extensively; and the Lord giving testimony to the word of his grace, made him instrumental in turning many from darkness to light. He finally settled in the vicinity of New Market, Shenandoah county, Va., and became the settled pastor of the Smith's Creek Baptist Church, which he served with credit to himself and the satisfaction of the church for more than fifty years. He was greatly afflicted during many of the last years of his life with a sore foot and leg, which prevented his usefulness in a considerable degree. He stuck a thorn in his foot when a mere boy, which was not extracted until a short time before his death. He had an ordinary English education, though greatly improved by extensive reading, deep and profound reflection. He manifested a warm and zealous interest in the cause of the Colonies in their struggle with their mother country, which finally eventuated in establishing their political and religious liberty, and enabled them to take a high and respectable standing among the nations of the earth.

"Elder A. C. Booten preached an eloquent and appropriate sermon from 2 Tim. IV. 7, 8.

"Elder Anderson Moffett and Barbara, daughter of Elder Casper Hupp, were married about the year 1780. Both her husband and father were Baptist preachers of the old school. He was a half brother of Daniel Moffett."

In Rev. S. H. Thompson's life story of Rev. John R. Moffett, who was a martyr-hero of the Temperance and Prohibition cause

in Virginia, having been assassinated on the Main Street of Danville, Virginia, November 11, 1892, there is this statement about Elder Anderson Moffett, on pages 2 and 3:

"When the Established Church in the Virginia colony, following the example of the mother country, determined to stamp out, what it pleased to call the heresy of the dissenters, prominent among those, whom neither the whipping in public pillory, the fines of the courts, the imprisonments in the common jails nor the howlings of the maddened mob could intimidate was a representative of the Moffett family.

"Of this member of the family it is recorded that while in jail at Culpeper for preaching the word of God as the Baptist believe it, he was almost suffocated by the fumes of burning pepper and sulphur.

"This imprisonment refers to the time when Moffett with several other Baptist ministers was thrown into jail because they would not cease preaching the word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ to the people. Elder Anderson Moffett was a true patriot, a faithful preacher and an earnest and consecrated christian gentleman. For more than fifty years he was pastor of Smith's Creek Baptist Church, near New Market, Shenandoah county, Virginia. He died May 14th, 1835, in his 89th year. He was a half brother of Daniel Moffett, the grandfather of John R. Moffett.

"In those days that tried men's souls the old hero preferred the bread and water diet and the foul air of Culpeper jail, to the abandonment of his faith in Christ and loyalty to him as King."

Elder Anderson Moffett's nephew, John Moffett, was the father of Judge W. W. Moffett, of Roanoke. The author wrote Judge Moffett for any information that he might have relative to the imprisonment of Anderson, and under date of December 21, 1923, Judge Moffett replied as follows:

"In early manhood my father taught school on the line of Rockingham and Shenandoah counties, several miles west of the residence of his uncle, Rev. Anderson Moffett. In this neighborhood my father found his first wife, who was Elizabeth Newman, a daughter of Samuel Newman. My father was well educated, a man of fine judgment and most exemplary character. Two sketches I have of him, the one by

the late General James G. Field, and the other by Ex-Senator F. P. Carter, both of whom knew him well, so say of my father.

"I have thus gone into detail to show that my father was reliable and had the opportunity of knowing what he said to me as set forth hereafter.

"My father's plantation was in Culpeper, from ten to twelve miles north of the courthouse. It must have been in the latter half of 1885, or the first part of 1886, that my father took me to Culpeper Court House. We were standing on the south side of the street looking at the Baptist Church on the north side of the same street. My father said to me, pointing to the church, 'There once stood the jail, and in that jail *my uncle*, Anderson Moffett, was imprisoned for preaching the Gospel.' Then turning to his right and designating the house on the corner diagonal from the Baptist Church, he said there was the home of two old people, Mr. and Mrs. Asher, who were ardent Baptists, and when that Baptist church was being built they sat under that tree (in the corner of their yard), watched its construction, rejoiced and thanked God for what He had done for the Baptists.

"Some years after this, the Baptist Church to which my father pointed, and in which I have often been, was destroyed by fire, and the present church, December 21, 1923, was erected on the same spot where the first church stood and where, theretofore was the old jail."

In addition to this bit of personal testimony on the part of Judge Moffett, he was kind enough to make a loan of several letters that were written to him forty-four years ago, by Miss Ann B. Newman. From these old missives have been selected these excerpts which bear directly upon Rev. Anderson Moffett, and his imprisonment in Culpeper jail.

In a letter dated March 23, 1894, and addressed to Judge W. W. Moffett, of Roanoke, Miss Ann B. Newman, who was a granddaughter of Rev. Anderson Moffett, gives this interesting information:

"Grand father Moffett commenced preaching when 17 years old, traveled and preached before his imprisonment in Culpeper, and after his imprisonment traveled and preached extensively, finally settled in the vicinity of New Market,

Shenandoah Co., Va., and became the pastor of Smith Creek Baptist Church which he served for more than *fifty years*, his health then failed which prevented his usefulness in a considerable degree, he died aged 88 years, 8 months and 16 days."

Evidently Judge Moffett replied to this letter making further inquiries about his forbears, for Miss Newman wrote to him again from Harrisonburg, Virginia, on April 11, 1894, as follows:

"Your letter was received a few days since, I will give such information as I trust will be of service to you.

* * * * *

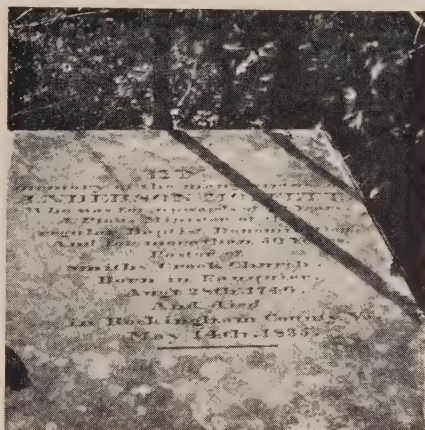
"There were no papers left in the family to show Grand fathers confinement in Culpeper jail, all his notes and sketches of his life wer burnt when his house was burnt the flames wer so rapid could save but little of the contents, and Grand father was to feeble to rewrite them, quite a loss to his family. Aunt Nancy Newman had a little book with the names of Baptist ministers who wer imprisoned in Culpeper jail, dont know what became of it, I reread the life of Rev. James Ireland yesterday who was imprisoned in Culpeper jail, I think same time Grand father was; he does not mention his name, I recently read the life of John Leland, he does not speak of my Grand father, he was a younger man. We are all confident he was a prisoner but have nothing in writing to show."

Rev. Anderson Moffett was perhaps the last of the old preachers, who had been imprisoned in the old Colonial gaols of Virginia, to pass away. He died in 1835 and is buried in the cemetery of his homestead on the south bank of Shenandoah River, a few miles west of New Market.

In the *Religious Herald*, of December 15, 1927, there is an address on "Four Early Baptist Ministers of Northern Virginia," by the eminent historian John W. Wayland, Ph. D., of Harrisonburg, Virginia, which was delivered before the General Association of Virginia, on November 17, 1927. In this address Dr. Wayland refers to Anderson Moffett and states that at one time "he lived about two miles west of New Market, beside the north branch of the Shenandoah River, in Rockingham county, where

he is buried, and where the inscription on his tombstone may still be read. The records of Shenandoah county, at Woodstock, and of Rockingham county, at Harrisonburg, contain hundreds of entries of marriages that he performed over a long period of years."

Then Dr. Wayland gives this interesting account of a visit he paid to the grave of Anderson Moffett:



STONE OVER ANDERSON MOFFETT'S GRAVE

"Five days ago I drove to New Market, turned westward on the Timberville road, and after two miles stopped at the substantial brick house by the riverside, which, from its general appearance, probably was built during Anderson Moffett's lifetime. Then I went out into the field, in the fertile river plain, to the little graveyard enclosed by a strong iron fence, and worked my way tediously through the tall briars and weeds to Moffett's grave. He, his wife, and two other members of the family have broad, flat slabs, lying horizontally on brick walls. Following is a literal and linear copy of the inscription:

'In
Memory of the many virtues of
Anderson Moffett
Who was for upwards of 70 years
A pious Minister of the
regular Baptist Denomination,
And for more than 50 years
Pastor of
Smiths Creek Church.
Born in Fauquier
Aug't 28th, 1746
And died
in Rockingham County, Va.
May 14th, 1835'."

The slab over Anderson Moffett's wife's grave bears the following inscription:

"Sacred
To The Memory
of
Barbara
Relict of Elder Anderson Moffett
Who Died Nov. 9, 1848:
Aged 90 Years, & 9 Days.

This world is all a fleeting show
For man's illusion given:
The smiles of joy, the tears of woe,
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow,
There's nothing true but Heaven."

CULPEPER CHURCH AND CULPEPER JAIL

Mountponey church came out of a church called Mountain Run, in Orange County, which was constituted in 1768 and since dissolved. "The meeting-house of this church was situated at the foot of Mountponey, on the road leading from Culpeper Court-house to Stevensburg." Gourdvine and Bethel were formed out of members from this church, and "In Sept. 1833, the church resolved to abandon the old house of worship, send a third colony to Stevensburg, and move with the remaining sixty white members to the town of Culpeper." At that time Mr. Waller R. Asher and his wife were the only white Baptists living in the town." In 1834 the church erected a new house of worship on the edge of the village of Culpeper, on the right of the road leading to Brandy station, near where it crosses Mountain Run; and in 1856 they bought a lot from the County Court, which was a part of the "public square." In 1858 they occupied their new house of worship, which was that year completed, on a "lot bought from the county court" and on the spot where stood the old jail in which Rev. James Ireland and so many other Baptist preachers were imprisoned and otherwise badly treated. The name of the church was changed on April 20, 1873, from Mountponey to Culpeper. In 1892 the house of worship was destroyed by fire,

on July 22nd, 1894, their present building was occupied, and on November 22 and 23, 1924, the church celebrated its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary.

On April 1, 1926, the following editorial by Dr. R. H. Pitt, appeared in the *Religious Herald*:

THE CULPEPER CHURCH AND THE JAIL

"We ask in another place in this paper whether the present house of worship of the Culpeper Baptist church is not built on the site of the old jail in which James Ireland was imprisoned? After we had written the question we began to inquire around us concerning the facts. We had an impression that the church was thus located. Altogether, we inquired of seven persons who we thought would be likely to know. From every one of them we received practically the same response, which fitted also our own state of mind on the subject. It was to the effect that they 'had heard that this church was built on the site of the jail,' and assumed that this was true but did not know of any particular evidence to this effect. We wrote at once to the pastor, our life long friend, Rev. E. W. Winfree, D. D., and from him comes this note:

" 'Culpeper, Va., March 26, 1926.

" 'Dear Dr. Pitt.—I quote from our Manual, prepared by Dr. C. F. James.

" "Rev. James B. Taylor, Jr., says of the house: 'It stands on the spot where stood the old jail in which Ireland was imprisoned and otherwise badly persecuted'."

" 'In a recent letter Brother Larkin Willis writes quoting his uncle, the Rev. Joseph H. Gordon, as saying that "the first Culpeper church"—he means the building destroyed by fire in October, 1892—"was built on the site of the old jail," and that he heard this verified by others. My own impression is that we occupy a corner of the same lot on which the jail stood—the jail itself being a few yards farther up town. But tradition, so far as I have learned, is unanimous in placing the church on the jail lot.

" 'Some of our court records were destroyed during the War Between the States, and the deeds, &c., relating to this action may have been among them.

Yours as ever,

E. W. Winfrey'."

"Persecution often defeats its own cause. Men cannot be restrained from thinking; and they will think that a bad cause which requires force to support it." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 180.)

So it seems clear that on the very spot, or at least in the same lot, where the old Culpeper jail stood, in which James Ireland, Elijah Craig, and so many other Baptist preachers were imprisoned to prevent them from preaching the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ, there now stands the Culpeper Baptist Church, where the Gospel may be preached without the fear of being molested or made afraid. This church had in 1938 a membership of 632, and out from it have gone six preachers, namely, Dudley Jeffries, R. P. Rixey, A. J. Coons, Stockton W. Cole, R. H. Stone and John F. Harris.

All that remains of that old Colonial jail is the lock and key, that was presented to Richmond College by Dr. Geo. B. Taylor, and one old mortar stained brick; both of which are being preserved by our Virginia Baptist Historical Society. The old lock is rusty and antiquated in appearance, and its ponderous key weighs $7\frac{1}{2}$ ounces. No longer does it respond to the touch of the jailer and bar the way of Baptist preachers to light and liberty. It served its purpose well, and if its tongue could speak many harrowing tales of persecution it no doubt would tell. This lock and key are all that is left of the old door which screeched and groaned on its mammoth, home-made hinges, as it swung to with a sudden thud, shutting in Baptist preachers from the light of day. As we think of this jail door, and all the others like it, in old Virginia at that time, a whole troop of sad memories come pouring in upon us, and we can not recall any other door around which so many sad memories cluster; unless it be the door of the unregenerated soul, which is locked and barred and overgrown with brambles, thereby completely shutting out the gentle Saviour who stands outside knocking, knocking, oh! so gently, seeking admittance and gaining none. This door has been beautifully portrayed by Holman Hunt in what is said to be the "most popular picture of a sacred subject that has ever been painted," and which bears the title of "The Light of the World."

At the semi-centennial of the General Association of Virginia Baptists in 1873, in the city of Richmond, there was one speech

that stood out in the minds of those who heard it, with greater distinctness than any other that was delivered during the entire meeting. It was an address by Dr. J. L. M. Curry, on "Struggles and Triumphs of Virginia Baptists," and if the test of an address is to be found in the length of time that it lingers in the minds of those who heard it, then Dr. Curry's address must have been a masterpiece and the very climax of oratory, for many of the survivors of that meeting have borne testimony to their vivid recollections of that hour after an interval of fifty long years. At the Centennial of the General Association of Virginia Baptists, held in 1923, in the same church in which the General Association was organized in 1823 (The Second Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia), there were quite a number of those who referred to themselves as the "Old Guard." They were the survivors of that memorable meeting of 1873. Prior to this meeting many of these men and women became reminiscently inclined and gave to the *Religious Herald* their impressions of that far-away meeting. In almost every instance *the* thing they remembered most clearly was Dr. Curry's speech, and the one outstanding feature of Dr. Curry's great address was that part when he picked up the old lock and key of Culpeper jail, and turned its bolt back and forth with its accompanying grating sounds which were distinctly heard all through the great audience. Several of those who recalled that thrilling episode, after fifty years had rolled by will be allowed to tell their story at this juncture. We shall not give the dates of these communications to the *Religious Herald*, because all of them sent their contribution to that valuable paper within one month prior to the Centennial celebration, which occurred in November 1923.

Dr. S. M. Provence wrote from Richmond, as follows:

"Perhaps the most unforgettable address of the occasion was that of our own Jabez Lamar Manly* Curry. Who that ever heard him anywhere could ever forget him? On this occasion, however, he fairly outdid himself. He was in his element, discussing 'The Baptist and Religious Freedom.' (I put up quotation marks, but the theme is given from memory and may need revision.)

*Should be Monroe.

"There were several 'thrills' in that speech. One came when Dr. Curry took up the lock of the old Culpeper jail-door, behind which Baptist preachers had been locked up for the 'crime' of preaching the gospel! Several times he turned the huge key in that old rusty lock, and its grating sound could be heard throughout the tabernacle. Another came when he took up a brick from the old jail in Middlesex through whose grated windows Baptist preachers had proclaimed the gospel of freedom to the eager crowds outside."

Dr. R. H. Pitt, the veteran editor of the *Religious Herald*, had this to say about the Middlesex relic:

"Everybody remembers the Culpeper jail, lock and key; only a few of us recall the brick from the old Middlesex county jail. But we can testify to the brick and that Dr. Curry held it up and identified it. We were from Middlesex, you see, and it was a collateral kinsman who had signed the warrant which put Greenwood and others in jail."

Rev. Andrew Broaddus wrote from Sparta, Virginia, as follows:

"And there stood handsome, brilliant, eloquent Curry, his face and figure transformed by the tremendous emotions that flamed in his breast. From the time he began his great speech until the end he held that vast audience in the hollow of his hand and when he reached the point where he described the sufferings of the Baptist preachers and their imprisonment in different counties, and turned to the table at his side, taking from it the old lock from Culpeper jail, that had fastened more than one Baptist preacher within its walls for the heinous offence of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and pausing for a brief moment turned the key in the lock back and forth, back and forth, his audience was thrilled to the depths of their being. Dear me! After fifty years I think I can plainly hear the grating of the rusty old lock as its bolt shot back and forth. Dr. Curry during his life stood before royal courts and addressed great and distinguished audiences, but I think this was the highest moment of his long and eminent life."

Rev. J. W. Wildman, wrote from Cluster Springs, as follows:

"I fully agree with Dr. Andrew Broaddus in his estimate of Dr. Curry's great address and its effect on the audience.

At least four thousand people listened an hour and a half to this historical recital, and when he closed every soul thrilled with gratitude and people gave with absolute abandon. It is not possible for people who were not present to appreciate the effect of the semi-centennial meetings upon the Baptists of Virginia."

Mr. Thomas O. Davidson, writing from Appomattox, Virginia, said:

"It has always seemed to me that the Jubilee was the greatest meeting that I ever attended. There were many notable addresses, but there was one which in my opinion, stood out above all others. It was delivered by Dr. J. L. M. Curry in a tent in front of the old college, and his theme was the part that Baptist took in the fight for religious liberty. It was a great address, and the great crowd was so eager to hear every word that he spoke that, although several of the improvised seats broke down, those who were sitting on them just sat where they fell. Those meetings have been an inspiration to me through all the years that have followed."

Rev. W. T. Hundley, writing from Cumnor, Virginia, gave his impression of that great speech:

"I am one of the semi-centenarians who was so fortunate as to be present on the campus of Richmond College in 1873, when J. L. M. Curry delivered his famous oration on Religious Liberty and as a fitting climax held up the old lock and key of the Culpeper jail. Men went wild on that occasion and when contributions were called for, some who had no ready cash to give offered their watches and jewelry, sacrifices laid on the altar of devotion to principles dearer than life itself."

Rev. J. M. Luck, writing from Roanoke, said:

"The large gathering at the College on the college centennial day made a great impression on me. Dr. Curry was one of my favorites and the greatest public speaker I have ever heard. I can never forget the thrill that passed through the great audience when the lock of the old Culpeper jail was held up and locked and relocked."

Mrs. W. E. Hatcher, of Fork Union, wrote as follows :

"No one who was there could forget the wave of holy indignation that seemed to sweep over the vast audience when Dr. Curry, in his masterly address, turned the rusty key in the Culpeper jail lock that imprisoned our noble ministers. Oh, shades of Patrick Henry, who first raised his voice in their defense. Methinks he would have stirred a bit if he had been present, and maybe he was."

Rev. Vernon I'Anson, of Norfolk, said :

"I heard Dr. Curry's great oration, perhaps the greatest oration I ever heard, delivered in his splendid, masterful style of oratory."

And Mrs. J. McH. Peters said :

"I remember the old, rusty jail lock and key and the old brick, too."

It seems everyone remembered the old rusty lock and key from the Culpeper jail and a few remembered the brick from the Urbanna prison, but no one recalled Waller's spoon,—the spoon he used while in prison. A paragraph in Rev. Richard B. Cook's *The Story of the Baptists in All Ages and Countries* (1886), page 226, refers to it in this way :

"The Baptist General Association of Virginia, after existing in other forms and under other names from 1771, was organized as at present, June 9, 1823. At its grand jubilee meeting held in Richmond, May, 1873, Dr. J. L. M. Curry, during his masterly speech, showed a spoon used by Waller, while a prisoner for conscience' sake, and a brick from the foundation of the old jail at Urbanna, Middlesex County, in which were imprisoned several Baptist preachers. He asked that the brick might go into the foundation of the monument to be erected to the memory of these noble sufferers for Christ. He also held up the lock and key of the old Culpeper jail, where James Ireland, Elijah Craig, John Corbeley and Thomas Ammon, preachers, and Adam Banks and Thomas Maxfield,* laymen, and John Delaney, were im-

*Maxwell.

prisoned. The latter, though not a member of the church, was arrested for allowing a prayer meeting to be held in his house, and the others for conducting it."

1774

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY

County Seat—Chesterfield

When the Southern District Association met at Hall's meeting-house in Halifax County, on the second Saturday in May 1774, letters were received from "preachers confined in prison, particularly from David Tinsley then in Chesterfield jail."

DAVID TINSLEY

*Imprisoned in Chesterfield County Jail for
Four Months and Sixteen Days*

David Tinsley had been arrested and on February 4, 1774, tried before the following six "Gentlemen Justices," according to Order Book of Chesterfield County, Number 5, page 398:

"At a court held for Chesterfield County, Febey. 4, 1774.

Arch. Cary

Tho. Bolling

Jacob Ashurst

Benjamin Branch

Fra. Goode

Jos. Botts, G. J."

And the crime with which he was charged is that he "assembled and preached to the people." But the Court's full procedure is thus recorded in the above mentioned volume, page 400:

"David Tinsley being committed charged with having assembled & preached to the people at sundry times & places in this County as a Baptist preacher and the said David acknowledging in Court that he had done so On consideration thereof the Court being of opinion that the same is a breach of the peace & good behavior It is ordered that he give Surety for keeping the peace & being of good behavior for one year next ensuing himself in the penalty of £50 & two Sureties in the penalty of £25 each."

Note that in this particular instance the prisoner is charged with assembling and preaching to the people at sundry times and places in that county "*as a Baptist preacher.*" Nothing whatever is said about the State church, Episcopal ordination, or the Toleration Act.

ARCHIBALD W. ROBERTS

*Indicted and Tried Not for Preaching, But for Using
Hymns and Poems Instead of the Psalms of David*

At the March court the Chesterfield officials seem to be wavering in their determination to prosecute these preachers, for the records show the indictment of a clergyman for using hymns and poems instead of the Psalms of David. His case was tried and continued and the following significant entry made on the court records for March 4, 1774, page 415, Order Book Number 5:

"The King	P	
vs		Indictment
Archibald W. Roberts	Clerk	D

"This day came the Attorney for our lord the King as well as the said Archibald by his Attorney and thereupon came also a Jury to wit Ralph Falkner William Giles John Fisher David Coupland John Leitch John Fowler Daniel W. Callum Joseph Jones Tho Gordon Tho Shores Henry Branch James Donald who being elected tried & sworn the truth to speak upon the Issue joined returning a special verdict in these words to wit 'We of the jury do find the deft has used Hymns or poems other than the Psalms of David after the communion service and after sermon. If upon the whole the law be against the deft. we find him guilty but if the law be for the deft. we find him not guilty. Ralph Falkner whereupon it is ordered that the same recorded and continued to be argued'."

While the Chesterfield officers were being buffeted about as to what constituted the law, poor David Tinsley was still languishing in prison. April showers usually bring forth May flowers, but neither April, nor the May, term of court brought him any relief. In his dire need he finally appealed to his brethren in association

assembled at Hall's meeting-house, in Halifax County, on the second Saturday in May, 1774. The Associational record has this to say about Elder Tinsley's appeal:

"Letters were received at this Association from preachers confined in prison particularly from David Tinsley, then in Chesterfield jail. The hearts of their brethren were affected at their sufferings, in consequence of which it was agreed to raise contributions for their aid."

The following resolution was also entered into:

"Agreed to set apart the second and third Saturdays in June as public fast days, in behalf of our poor blind persecutors, and for the releasement of our brethren." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 50.)

These imprisoned preachers were in a sorry plight, but their associational brethren think first of their "poor blind persecutors." "Open the shutters and let in more light," was the mournfully significant dying exclamation of Goethe, and the Association in session at Hall's meeting-house felt, first of all, that their persecutors needed more light.

The "other preachers" who sent letters to the Association were no doubt Waller, Shackelford and Ware, who were confined at this time in the Essex County jail, Tappahannock, Virginia.

A short sketch of David Tinsley, in Beale's *Semple* (1894), page 476, contains this statement with reference to his imprisonment:

"The hand of persecution immured him for four months and sixteen days in Chesterfield jail. Through the grated window of this prison he with others of his fellow-prisoners preached to the crowd without. One who was led to Christ by this preaching has testified: 'All around the jail the crowded assembly would stand, some weeping and others rejoicing, as they received the word of truth.'"

Now the brethren did *two* things at that memorable Associational meeting in Halifax County. *First*, they undertook to raise a contribution for the aid of their imprisoned brethren, as Paul

did for the poor saints at Jerusalem. With reference to this act, Dr. Geo. W. Beale says in an article published in the *Religious Herald*:

"The first ministerial work ever done in Virginia was by the Separate Baptist at Hall's meeting house in Halifax, in May, 1774, when they made a contribution for the comfort of their imprisoned brethren, and set apart two days of fasting in behalf of their releasement. These noble prisoners and their sympathizers formed the *bandana brigade* among the old soldiers of our faith. The money sent to Patrick Henry for his employment in behalf of their release from prison was wrapped up in a handkerchief of the above description, and by that noble patriot returned in the same way. When the malice of their enemies had erected a close, high plank fence* in front of the jail windows to prevent the imprisoned preachers from exhorting the crowd without, a handkerchief displayed on a pole above the screen became the signal from the waiting people that they were ready to hear, when the stalwart voice of one of the prisoners would send the truth home through the boards to the hearts of the listening company. Historic handkerchief! Never did a standard give signal in a worthier cause, or float before a nobler beleagured band."

The *second* thing these brethren did at Hall's meeting-house, was to set apart two "public fast days." Nothing is said in the resolution about *prayer*, but "fasting and prayer" were the Siamese twins of the religious life of that day and the mention of one implied the other. Money could relieve in some measure at least the physical sufferings of these imprisoned preachers, and in a few instances perhaps secure their liberty, but in the case of David Tinsley, and perhaps others also, it seems that they were the kind that "goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

"Four months and sixteen days" from February 4th would bring the date of Tinsley's liberation close to, if not coincident with, the second public fast day of these brethren, which was the third Saturday in June. Prayer has wrought more than this world ever dreamt of. If we believe the Apostle's statement, that the effectual fervent prayer of one righteous man availeth

*All other authorities say it was a "brick wall," not a "plank fence."

much, and the positive assertion of our Lord himself, "That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father which is in heaven," then, surely we will have no difficulty in believing that a *number of people* "Fasting and praying" for the "releasement of their brethren" and the opening of the eyes of their "poor blind persecutors" would surely accomplish the desired result. While they yet prayed "Peter stood before the gate," and David Tinsley found the words of the poet to be literally true:

"A good man's prayers
Will from the deepest dungeon climb to heaven's height
And bring a blessing down."

Prayer is the link that connects earth and heaven, the impotence of man with the omnipotence of God, and David Tinsley was not only released about this time, but the series of imprisonments was drawing to a close. Only two more arrests are known to have been made throughout the entire State of Virginia, one in 1775 and another in 1778; the first one being bound over to keep the peace and then released, while the second one jailed for some time on a charge of vagrancy was released, his accusers not being able to make out a case against him.

Rev. R. H. Beasley writing from Manchester on January 16, 1873, to Rev. J. L. Burrows, D. D., Richmond, Virginia, gives copies of the court records referring to the imprisoned preachers in Chesterfield County, concluding his letter with the following paragraphs:

"There may be others whose names might be found among the records of the county court—and I shall attempt another examination ere long.

"The jail in which these persecuted brethren were confined is doubtless standing. It is now known as the 'old Debtor's Jail.' It was erected of white oak-hewn logs, cramed with mortar, and securely weather-boarded.

"Perhaps enough information in regard to Bro. Eleazer Clay has been obtained — from other sources — particularly from W. J. Morrisett of Bristol, and perhaps others—His name however appears upon the record. I learn that it is highly probable that the old residence of E. Clay is now standing."

The Chesterfield jail was used longer than any other in Virginia as a place for the incarceration of Baptist preachers for the crime of preaching the Gospel. This "diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution," as James Madison termed it, began in Chesterfield in 1770 and continued until 1774—David Tinsley being the last preacher to be released from the Chesterfield jail.

"In 1782 Elder Tinsley entered upon a brief pastorate with Mathews's church, in the Dover Association. In 1785 he removed to Georgia, having sailed from Yorktown to Savannah. He settled with Abilene (then Red Creek) church, in the vicinity of Augusta. He died at the age of fifty-two years, in October, 1801. (From Beale's *Semple* (1894), p. 476.)

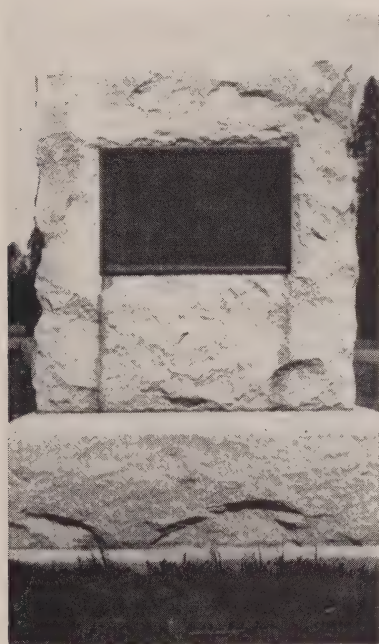
From Georgia we learn how some of the preachers employed their time while they were shut up in a Virginia prison. This account of David Tinsley is apropos. It will be recalled that Jeremiah Walker, after removing to Georgia, split the Georgia Baptist Association asunder by his doctrinal controversy. Jesse Mercer's account of that unfortunate division names David Tinsley as Mr. Walker's ablest ally, and then tells how these two men employed some of their time while they were incarcerated in the Chesterfield gaol:

"David Tinsley had been the fellow-laborer and joint sufferer of Mr. W. (Walker) in Virginia; they were confined for some time in the same prison. Mr. T. (Tinsley) used to say that he received his first Arminian notions from Mr. W. whilst thus shut up in prison. This occurred in the following way. As they were shut out from the world, incarcerated within the gloomy walls of a prison for the truth's sake, they frequently gave vigor to their minds, and wore the time away by taking different sides upon controverted points in Theology. Mr. W. used to take the Arminian side against his friend T., and most generally foiled him upon his own ground, at least he was successful in making 'the worst appear the better reason,' to the no small injury of his brother: For Mr. T. was induced to adopt the system. This should be a warning to those who would sport with sacred things, or play with feigned argument; like edged tools in the hands of children, they are always likely to do

more evil than good. Mr. T. was a man of fine parts, amiable manners and exalted piety." (From Jesse Mercer's *A History of the Georgia Baptist Association*, p. 26.)

The name of David Tinsley and six other preachers will be perpetuated by :

*A Granite Monument and Bronze Tablet Erected
at Chesterfield Court House in Memory of
Seven Baptist Ministers*



MONUMENT AT
CHESTERFIELD COURT HOUSE

On July 31, 1925, the Middle District Baptist Association erected a monument to the imprisoned preachers in Chesterfield County. In an article in the *Religious Herald*, of August 20, 1925, by Professor Garnett Ryland, the following statement is made :

"On the site of the old 'debtor's jail,' at Chesterfield Court House, a shrine long sacred to Virginia Baptists, the Middle

District Association has erected and unveiled a handsome memorial to the seven men who, a century and a half ago, were confined there for preaching the gospel.

* * * * *

"The monument is of native Chesterfield granite, standing seven and a half feet high and bearing a large tablet with the inscription:

"On this spot were imprisoned

1770-1774

John Tanner
William Webber
Augustine Eastin

David Tinsley
Joseph Anthony
Jeremiah Walker

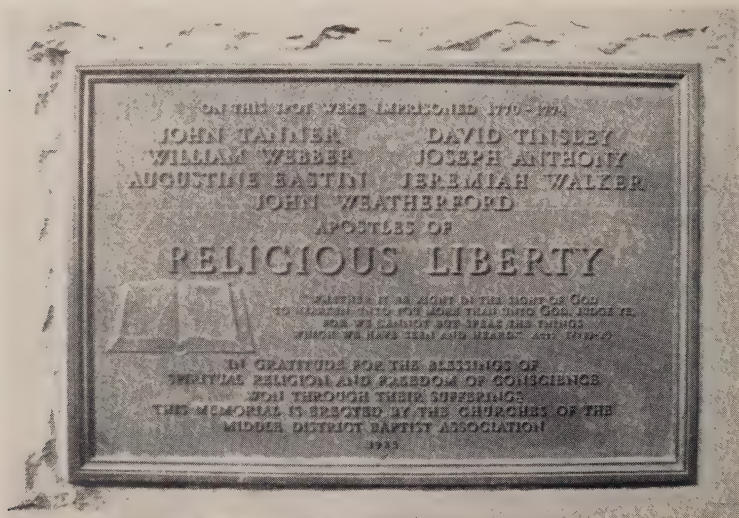
John Weatherford

Apostles of Religious Liberty

"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard.—Acts iv:19-20.

"In gratitude for the blessings of spiritual religion and freedom of conscience, won through their sufferings, this memorial is erected by the churches of the Middle District Baptist Association.

1925."



TABLET ON MONUMENT AT CHESTERFIELD COURT HOUSE

Here is an interesting side light on that far away day, when the gospel was preached through the grated windows of Virginia jails. It has been previously stated that "persecution always whets the edge of devotion"; but it also awakens much curiosity on the part of those not "devoted"; and many a man has been led by his curiosity, like Zaccheus of old, into a place where the gospel net is spread and has become entangled in its meshes. It was so with Elder John Goode, as this interesting account shows:

In the minutes of the Middle District Baptist Association, for the year 1924, pages 25 and 26, there is a letter addressed to the Clerk, Rev. R. T. Marsh, D. D., which is as follows:

"Please find enclosed my check for \$10.00 to help out on the memorial to the Baptist Preachers at Chesterfield Courthouse.

"Besides my interest as a Baptist, I have a personal and family interest in helping to rear this monument. My mother was Susan Goode Farmer. Her great-grandfather was John Goode, the first settled pastor of Skinquarter Church, where he died in the pastorate June 12, 1790.

"John Goode was the first Baptist among my mother's ancestors. John Goode became a Baptist in this wise. In his early youth he lost respect for the established church, having been fined in Henrico county for fox hunting on Sunday, and failing to support the church. He removed to Chesterfield, married Sarah Brown and settled near Skinquarter Springs.

"Now when they imprisoned Baptist preachers for preaching the Gospel a fellow feeling and curiosity took him to the courthouse to hear them preach. He fell under conviction, was baptized and later ordained by William Hickman. Since John Goode there have been nothing but Baptists in my mother's family.

Fraternally yours,

John Ernest Cook."

1775

RICHMOND COUNTY

County Seat—Warsaw

Mention has been made of a previous visit of Lewis Lunsford to Richmond County, perhaps in 1773, when, according to our own histories and the secular press of that day, the clergyman of the parish tried to check-mate him by preaching against the Ana-

baptists. How long this mode of warfare was continued we do not know, but there came a time when the enemy realized that pelting these preachers with plausible platitudes was not a very profitable business, for it did not prevent the people from following the new prophet. Hiding behind the preacher's desk and hurling even weighty arguments at one's antagonist may be a safe mode of warfare, but it did not stop the invasion of the enemy, and so entirely different tactics were put into operation.

LEWIS LUNSFORD

Bound for His Good Behaviour in Richmond County

"When Mr. L. preached again in the same part, they attacked him by more weighty arguments. A constable was sent with a warrant to arrest him. The constable, with more politeness than is usual on such occasions, waited until Mr. Lunsford had preached. His fascinating powers palsied the constable's hand. He would not, he said, serve a warrant on so good a man. Another man took it, and went, tremblingly, and served it. Mr. Lunsford attended the summons, and appeared before a magistrate. He was held in a recognizance to appear at court." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 418.)

Richard Dozier heard Lewis Lunsford preach at Robert Lyne's, in Richmond County, on September 10, 1775, from Acts 17:19:

"And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?"

On pages 13 and 14 of Elder Henry Toler's sermon may be found this account of that meeting which tallies to the day with Richard Dozier's account:

"On a Lord's day, September 10, 1775, Mr. Lunsford preached in the same county and Parish at Mr. Robert Lyne's, to which meeting a Constable came with a warrant attended by several persons to take him before a magistrate as an itinerant preacher. The constable chose not to execute the warrant till Mr. Lunsford had preached. While he was preaching in the house there was a great contention among the opposing party without. Some threw stones on and in the House, and seemed very desirous to see the preacher in custody,

while others declared warmly against it. The quarrel continued till some time after the preaching ended—and now the constable said the preacher was a good man, and he would not serve the warrant on him. Whereupon a Mr. G-d-n, took the warrant out of the Constable's hand and said he would serve it. Contention still ran highly on the subject, but Mr. G-d-n (who sometime afterwards ran mad), went to Mr. Lunsford, and with trembling hand touched him with the paper. It was then (very properly) said Mr. Lunsford was under no obligation to go with them; but he agreed to go, and they took him before Major B-f-d, to whom (in his words) It appearing that the said Lewis Lunsford did this day assemble a considerable number of persons within this county, and did preach to them contrary to law, *he bound him, with securities, in a recognizance unto (as then expressed) Our Sovereign Lord The King, personally to appear at the next court to be held for the county of Richmond, and then and there to do what should be enjoined him by the said court. He appeared accordingly, and it was the opinion of the Court, that he was guilty of a breach of good behavior, and that he should give security. He chose rather to go to prison, but Mr. W-d-n (an attorney who voluntarily defended him) and some of his intimate friends persuaded him to give security, and apply to government for licence to preach, which it was believed by the act of toleration he would obtain. On application he failed, and being greatly distressed that he had bound himself not to preach in the county for twelve months, he would fain have broken thro' his obligation immediately, but his securities prevailed on him not to do so. He always afterwards highly disapproved of his conduct in not going to jail, and said it gave him more uneasiness than anything he had ever done."*

Perhaps the polite constable was as curious as the Athenians to know something about the "new doctrine" that was being preached in Richmond County, in 1775, and it would be interesting to know whether he became a Baptist or not. Richard Dozier states in his notes with reference to that memorable day, that:

"He (Lewis Lunsford) was that day taken and carried before Capt. Belfield for preaching and there gave security to appear at court, and at court he gave security not to preach in the county in a 12 months."

Mr. Lunsford attended court, was tried for his misdemeanor and the following record of the court's action is found in Court Order Book No. 19, pages 107 and 110:

"At a Court held for Richmond county the Second day of October, 1775.

Present

Landon Carter	Robert W. Carter	} Gent. Justices
William Brockenbrough	Charles McCarty	
William Peachey	John Belfield	

"Lewis Lunsford an Itinerant Preacher having been bound to appear at this Court for assembling a Considerable number of persons and preaching to them Contrary to Law was call'd into Court & the matter fully heard on both sides. Whereupon it is the opinion of the Court that the said Lunsford is guilty of a breach of good behaviour & that he give Security. Whereupon the said Lunsford acknowledged himself bound in the Sum of £100 and Jos: Willson & ——— Lyne his Securitys in the sum of £50 each."

Continuing Semple's account we learn why Mr. Lunsford did not go to jail: "The court determined, that he had been guilty of a breach of good behaviour; and that he must give security, or go to prison. He was advised to give security; under the expectation of obtaining license to preach. He tried; but could not. He often regretted that he had taken this step; and was sorry he had not gone to prison. This took place in Richmond county."

Fristoe's *History of the Kettocton Association* (1808), page 71, states that the author knew "the general court to refuse a license for a baptist meeting house, in the county of Richmond, because there was a presbyterian meeting house already in the county—although the act of toleration considered them distinct societies." Perhaps this explains why Lewis Lunsford failed to obtain license to preach.

1775

CAROLINE COUNTY

County Seat—Bowling Green

HIPKINS PITMAN

Threatened with a Whipping, But Discharged

Elder Hipkins Pitman, a resident member of Reed's church, in Caroline County, "was once taken up and threatened to be

whipped, but was discharged without any further injury." (Beale's *Semple*, p. 154.)

YOUNGER PITTS AND MR. PICKET

*Taken Up and Carried by Force Some Distance
and Released*

The last violence offered to a Baptist in Caroline County was in the bounds of Tuckahoe church, in 1775, "when Younger Pitts, a preacher, and a man by the name of Picket were taken up and carried by force some distance, as if with a view to bring them before a magistrate, but after some abuse, &c., they set them at liberty." (Beale's *Semple*, p. 156.)

1775.

GLOUCESTER COUNTY

County Seat—Gloucester

IVISON LEWIS

When Ivison Lewis first preached in the lower end of Gloucester County, in that part which is sometimes called "Guinea," we are told that:

"He met with violent opposition from individuals; but treating them with levity and meekness he soon made many of them as friendly as they had been hostile." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 128.)

On page 1 of the church book of the Union Baptist Church (Gloucester County), formerly Abingdon Baptist Church, there is this record:

"In her early history she encountered much opposition and suffered many persecutions."

Semple's *History* (1810), page 91, gives "1801" as the date of constitution of the Abingdon church. Taylor's sketch of Mr. Lewis says that he began to relinquish his hold on the churches, so far from his home, a few years after 1790, because of old age. Then, since he visited Matthews County in 1772 and 1773, and since the Mathews church was constituted in 1775, it seems most

probable that the persecution arose during his first visit to that section, and perhaps not later than 1775.

After mentioning an old Colonial church that was built between 1750 and 1758, Mr. W. W. Scott's *History* says:

"The Pine Stake Church, supposed to have been built about the same time as the last, was several miles below 'Hawfield,' and about a mile and a half east of Everona, near the road to old Verdiersville. It was standing in 1813. During the Revolution 'Parson' Leland, as he was called, a Baptist preacher who is referred to at length elsewhere, asked to preach there, which the vestry declined to permit, James Madison, the elder, writing the letter for them." (Scott's *History of Orange County, Virginia* (1907), p. 44.)

The Pine Stake Church was a church of the Establishment and why Mr. Leland requested permission to use it, we are not informed. Mr. Scott's *History* on page 188, gives this other reference to "Parson" Leland, which we suppose is what he means when he says on page 44, that he will be "referred to at length elsewhere":

"Leland, John. A Baptist preacher, born in Massachusetts in 1754. He came to Culpeper in 1775, and was made pastor of Mt. Poney church, where he soon had trouble, and came to Orange in 1776."

This "trouble" was caused by the Mountponey church calling him when he had not been "ordained by the imposition of hands," etc. (See Semple's *History* (1810), page 177, for further details.)

In Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers, Second Series* (1860), page 33, may be found this reference to Mr. Leland:

"The fall of 1777 seems to have been with him a season of great spiritual enjoyment. He says: 'For eight months after this I had the spirit of prayer to a degree beyond what I ever had in my life; and, if I mistake not, my preaching savored a little of the same spirit. My field of preaching was from Orange down to York, about 120 miles. From November, 1779, to July 1780, I baptized 130, the chiefest of whom

professed to be the seals of my ministry. As this was the first time that ever such a work attended my ministry, it was refreshing indeed; nor can I think of it now, without soft emotions of heart. The chiefest of my success was in York, where Lord Cornwallis and the British army were made prisoners, in October, 1781. Matthew Wood, Robert Stacy, and Thomas Cheesman (all preachers afterwards), were the children of this revival’.”

This church in “York” was evidently the Grafton Baptist Church, located near Yorktown, and probably named after the home town of Elder John Leland, *Grafton*, Massachusetts.

In Dr. Taylor’s same account, page 35, he gives Elder Leland’s own account of the following incident:

JOHN LELAND
Threatened with a Gun

“In the south part of Orange a man took his gun with the profession to kill me. He had given his consent for his wife to be baptized, and the meeting was appointed for that purpose; but when we got to the place, and I had taken her by the hand to lead her into the water, there was an alarm that the man was coming with his gun. While a detachment of the congregation went to meet the man, to pacify him, I thought, ‘Now, or never,’ and baptized her. No mischief ensued.”

Elder Leland returned to Massachusetts in 1791, locating the next year in Cheshire. In the *Religious Herald* (Richmond, Virginia) for October 1, 1830, there is a letter from him containing an account of some experiences while pastor in Virginia. This letter was addressed to Mr. Uriel B. Chambers, and the church referred to was probably Mountain Run.

“Your father was a deacon in the church that I belonged to, in Orange County, Va. Your mother, two of your brothers, one sister and your uncle —— were John’s disciples. Many meetings have I attended at your father’s house, on Mountain run.

* * * * * *

“In the year 1781, and afterwards, a great number of my friends moved to Kentucky. I have heard of the death of

many of them; but as many of them were younger than myself, it is probable that they are living. While I am writing these persons present themselves to my imagination, and bring fresh to my mind the meetings we had in Virginia."

* * * * *

"I am now 76 years old. I have had a number of sicknesses, and twice a broken leg; but now enjoy good health. My sight is so good, that with glasses, I can sharpen my pen and read fine print. My hearing is poor (indeed it was always dull), but still I hear much that does me no good. My bodily strength gives way; I cannot walk as I once could. On the 10th day of June 1779, I walked on foot from Orange to Culpeper, 20 miles, and preached a funeral sermon of a man who, fell from a fence and broke his neck, and walked back again the same day; but I could not do the like now, if every man in Culpeper was to break his neck."

BOTETOURT COUNTY

County Seat—Fincastle

Two of the chief grievances of the early dissenters from the Established Church were, that they were not allowed to marry their own people, or to bury their own dead, without being forced to pay the parson of the parish for these services. It seems that there was no objection to our Baptist ministers performing these duties provided they turned over the dollars to the representative of the Establishment. Our Baptist forefathers were constantly petitioning the House of Burgesses, or the Virginia Assembly, for relief from such unjust discrimination. Various methods were adopted to get around the legal strictures which were imposed, and some of them, at least, were unquestionably wrong. There may be some question about the authorities going so far as to imprison a preacher for not conforming to all the requirements laid down by the ecclesiastical and civil courts but considerable publicity has been given to the following statement concerning Elder John Alderson, Sr., and it is here given for what it is worth, hoping that additional evidence may be unearthed at a later day.

Rev. L. A. Alderson, writing from Atkinson, Kansas, in a letter addressed to Rev. Geo. B. Taylor, and printed in the *Religious Herald* of January 12, 1871, states:

JOHN ALDERSON, SR.
*Imprisoned in Fincastle; Duration of
Imprisonment Unknown*

"Rev. John Alderson, sr., removed to Botetourt County in 1770. He was imprisoned in Fincastle, not, however, for preaching the gospel; for the Established Church had not sufficient influence to imprison the Baptists in the Valley of Virginia; but he was imprisoned for celebrating the rites of matrimony, as he and other dissenters, as you have stated, had been advised to do by Patrick Henry."

Rev. John Alderson, Sr., was pastor of one of the earliest Baptist churches in the Valley of Virginia, Smith's and Linville Creek Church, located in Rockingham County. This church was constituted August 6, 1756, being composed of Baptists who originally belonged to churches affiliated with the Philadelphia Association, or perhaps they came from New England. Some of these Baptists are known to have been living in that neighborhood as early as 1745. John Alderson, Sr., served this church for sixteen years in its early history. Rev. L. A. Alderson says that Elder John Alderson, Sr., "removed to Botetourt County in 1770." Mr. C. H. Urner, of Richmond, Virginia, not only a very careful historian, but who as a young man attended this church, had in recent years access to the minute book of the church, and under date of March 24, 1924, wrote the author of this volume as follows:

"I am in receipt of your letter of enquiry concerning Elder John Alderson, Sr. and his supposed imprisonment in Botetourt, and I regret to say that I cannot direct you to any certain record which would settle the question raised.

"I am acquainted with the claims of Lewis Alderson, but have not been convinced of the correctness of his statement. It is a well known fact that Baptist Ministers frequently officiated at marriages, when the law of Virginia, did not permit dissenters to perform this ceremony, and there appears to be no well authenticated instance, where the penalty for this violation of law was imprisonment of the offender.

"The minutes of the Ketocton Association held in August 1772 show that John Alderson, Sr. was present, and the record of Smith's Creek Church early in 1773 indicate that

John Alderson, Sr. was no longer pastor of the church. So far as I have been able to ascertain, there is no record of Mr. Alderson's activities in the ministry after he left the pastorate of Smith's Creek.

"The above relation would prove that Lewis Alderson was wrong about his date, and before accepting his other statement as history, I should like to have further evidence."

In the historical sketch of "John Alderson, Jr.," in Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1860), page 157, this statement is made:

"His father having about this time removed to Botetourt County he was ordained and took charge of the Lynville Creek Church, October, 1775."

Rev. L. A. Alderson says that his grandfather was imprisoned "for celebrating the rites of matrimony," while others have thought that perhaps it was because he failed "to pay the Parson" for these services. The fact that such payment was required to be made by the officiating minister to the Parson of the parish is proven by several records in an old book which is now in the custody of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society. The quaint label on this old book is, *A Book Containing the Marriages by me, John Alderson*, and the first entry is as follows:

"13. on the Day of Settlement with the Curiot was June ye 4, 1776. David Rader with Ruth Henton."

The second entry is in the form of a receipt which explains the first one, which is rather ambiguous:

"June 4, 1776. Received from John Alderson three pounds five shillings, being the amount of ten marriage fees.

Alex. Balmain, clk.,

Curate of Augusta Parish."

The abbreviation of "clk" stood for clerk—clerk of the parish.

Having to pay the minister of another church for the privilege of uniting the people of the Baptist fold in the holy bonds of matrimony, was one of the chief bones of contention at that time,

and it went so much against the grain that protests and remonstrances galore were produced. Patrick Henry finally advised the dissenting ministers to go ahead and celebrate the rites of matrimony without the General Court's sanction, as the surest means of securing it. This whipping the devil around the stump appears to us, at this late date, exceedingly questionable, but the times were very strenuous and the predicament in which our brethren found themselves very unusual. Other ministers were in the same dilemma. A Lutheran clergyman, for example, resorted to another scheme to circumvent an unjust law. Rev. John Peter Gabriel Muhlenburg, of Revolutionary fame, lived at that time in Woodstock, Virginia, and is said to have made the long journey from that place to London, England, in April 1772, for the express purpose of securing Episcopal ordination and the usual clerical grant from the English government which accomplished it. This would give him the right to perform marriage rites and other legal rituals in the Virginia colony. For a Lutheran minister to resort to such a scheme to get around the laws of that day against dissenters, is admittedly a rather unusual thing, but Rev. Mr. Muhlenburg was a strong character, with very pronounced powers of initiative, great executive ability, and amply qualified to do the unusual thing, as the following historical fact will prove. In 1775 he preached in the little log church at Woodstock, a flaming sermon to his own congregation from the text found in Ecclesiastes 3:1 and 8; which reads, there is "a time to every purpose under heaven, a time of war, and a time of peace." At the close of this sermon he electrified his congregation by casting aside his clerical robe and revealing the uniform of a Continental Colonel, and holding forth his commission in the Continental army, declared that he thought the time to fight had come. He thereupon raised the Eighth Virginia Regiment, largely from the members of his own congregation, which soon became famous as the Dutch Regiment and served throughout the Revolutionary War, with distinction.

This action of Rev. Mr. Muhlenburg, in submitting to Episcopal ordination, is only another illustration of the various devices that different ministers of that day resorted to in order that they might perform marriage ceremonies and conduct funeral services

without having to pay the clergymen of the Establishment for the privilege.

It is earnestly hoped that further research will reveal the facts in the case of John Alderson, Sr., and if it is proven that he was incarcerated in the gaol of Botetourt County, that the exact nature of his misdemeanor may be proven.

John Alderson, Sr., was born in Yorkshire, England, in 1699, and from two footnotes in Beale's *Revision of Semple's History* (1894), pages 378 and 424, it appears that upon his arrival in this country he first located near Bethlehem church, New Jersey, later removing to Germantown, Pennsylvania, from which place he came to Virginia, taking up his residence in Rockingham county, in 1755.

"His last years were spent in Botetourt county (then an immense domain), where he died in 1781, aged eighty-two years. He was buried in the graveyard of his neighborhood, afterwards abandoned and overgrown with tall oaks, with neither hillock nor stone to mark his resting-place."

1776

RICHMOND COUNTY

County Seat—Warsaw

JAMES GREENWOOD

Threatened But Not Molested

About the year 1776 "James Greenwood was invited by a Mrs. Sucket, who lived in Richmond county, on the Rappahannock, to preach at her home. Before he went he was apprehensive of considerable opposition, but was agreeably disappointed. The people were attentive. Being encouraged, he and Mr. William Mullin continued to visit them, preaching at private houses, until a stage and seats were fixed. They were sometimes threatened to be treated roughly, but these threats never were executed. Their labors proved effectual, and several were baptized and a church constituted. Mr. Mullin continued to visit them statedly, for twelve or thirteen years, and the church prospered." (*Semple's History* (1810), p. 135.)

This church received the name of Farnham and is located near the village of the same name, the site of the meeting-house being not far from the Rappahannock River.

CHAPTER XV

1778

DAVID BARROW DUCKED AND NEARLY DROWNED

NANSEMOND COUNTY

County Seat—Suffolk

DAVID BARROW AND EDWARD MINTZ

Benedict's *History* (1813), Vol. II, page 248, states that David Barrow was "a native of Virginia, where he commenced his ministry in 1771; in the early part of which he suffered much by the insolence and persecuting rage of his rude countrymen."

Taylor's sketch in Volume I, page 163, says:

"Elder Barrow had himself smarted beneath the severe hand of persecution. Several times it was attempted to prevent him from filling his appointments. His sufferings were frequently painful."

Semple's *History*, 1810 edition, page 357, gives this account of one instance of persecution that these good men suffered:

DAVID BARROW AND EDWARD MINTZ

Nearly Drowned

"On the first preaching of the Baptists in these parts, they met with violent opposition. A mob collected at one of their meetings, and seized the preachers Barrow and Mintz, and carried them to a water not far distant. There they dipped them several times holding them under the water until they were nearly drowned; asking them if they believed. At length, Mr. Barrow replied, *I believe* you mean to drown me. Notwithstanding this opposition, the gospel progressed. The church, with some interruptions, has enjoyed peace and prosperity."

"The church" referred to here was the Shoulder Hill Baptist Church, which was originally located in Nansemond County, but now is in Norfolk County and is called Churchland.

Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, Volume I, pages 163 and 164, quotes a footnote found in Benedict's *History*, Vol. II, page 249, which contains additional particulars:

"In 1778, Mr. Barrow received an invitation to preach at the house of a gentleman, who lived on Nansemond River near the mouth of James River. A ministering brother accompanied him. They were informed on their arrival, that they might expect rough usage, and so it happened. A gang of well-dressed men came up to the stage, which had been erected under some trees, as soon as the hymn was given out, and sung one of their obscene songs. They then undertook to plunge both of the preachers. Mr. Barrow they plunged twice, pressed him into the mud, held him long under the water, and came near drowning him. In the midst of their mocking, they asked him if he believed? and throughout treated him with the most barbarous insolence and outrage. His companion they plunged but once. The whole assembly was shocked, the women shrieked, but no one durst interfere; for about twenty stout fellows were engaged in this horrid measure. They insulted and abused the gentleman who invited them to preach, and every one who spoke a word in their favour. Before these persecuted men could change their clothes, they were dragged from the house, and driven off by these outrageous churchmen. But three or four of them died in a few weeks, in a distracted manner, and one of them wished himself in hell before he had joined the company, &c."

Edward Mintz became pastor of the Shoulder Hill church when it was organized January, 1787.

Col. Parke P. Deans, the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, has furnished us with the following letter from Mr. W. E. McClenny, of Suffolk, who is the recognized historian of all that section. This letter contains some additional information about this incident:

"Suffolk, Va., April 10th, 1937.

"Col. Parke P. Deans,
Richmond, Va.

Dear Col. Deans:—

"Your letter of the 8th with enclosure received, and I will reply to same before it gets cold. The best account of the

treatment of the early Baptists in Nansemond County, at Sleepy Hole is in the files of *The Suffolk Herald* of March 7th, 1883. I just verified this date, but owing to the fire the signature is gone, but I copied it several years before the fire, and it was signed R. J. who was no doubt Rev. Reuben Jones who was a prominent Baptist minister in this section at that day, and was then pastor of the Churchland Baptist Church. It is as follows:

“‘It happened in this year (1778?) that (Revs) David Barrow and Edward Mintz, Baptist ministers, commenced preaching at a private house near Sleepy Hole. (We have never learned the owner of that house.) (This was in Suffolk Parish of Nansemond County, and was between what is now St. John’s P. E. Church and the Glebe P. E. Church at Driver, and very near the glebe farm.) This so far as the writer is informed was the first Baptist preaching ever held in the vicinity of Sleepy Hole. It happened that the preaching of these strangers produced a decided impression in the neighborhood, and the news spread across the Nansemond river into the dominion of the old Colonial church near Chuckatuck (now known as St. John’s). It happened that about twenty wild young men, prompted I suspect by the evil one, came across the river, took Barrow and Mintz from the stand where they were preaching, and regardless of the screams of the women, carried them down to the river. “Now,” said they to the preachers, “you believe in dipping, and we mean to give you a plenty of it.” It happened that they put these men under water repeatedly, and held them under until they were nearly suffocated. They said to Barrow, after he had rallied a little from strangling: “Do you believe?” He replied, “I believe you mean to drown me.” They then abused the man who invited them into the neighborhood, and forewarned him of the punishment he might expect if these preachers were found at his house again. It then happened that they drove these preachers away in their wet clothes, with positive orders never to come back again. These men of God disregarded the threatening orders of the emissaries of Satan and continued to preach at Sleepy Hole without further molestation. It happened that many believed and were baptized, and afterwards were organized into a branch of the Western Branch Baptist Church, then known as “McClenny’s.” After meeting and worshipping in that capacity for four years they were con-

stituted into an independent Baptist Church at Shoulder's Hill in January 1785. (This name was from a citizen who owned the land, and today there is a large Colored Baptist Church on this site.) Some years ago they changed their location to Churchland, but the church still retains the original name "Shoulder's Hill." R. J.

Churchland, Va.

"The old colonial church near Chuckatuck dates back to the early days of Nansemond Co. Present church built about 1753 by Moses Allmand. In its early days the members were perhaps the most straight laced Churchmen in Virginia. Their Vestry Book with all the oaths was taken as the model by Bishop Meade in his *Old Churches and Families in Virginia*, if your author cares to verify this consult that work under Isle of Wight Co. and the old brick, Benn's or St. Luke's, as it is called today, as the account of the Chuckatuck church and old Benn's come together in that work even if they are not in the same county. In the early days 1672 to 1725 they had been great persecutors of the Friends or Quakers in that vicinity, as the extant Quaker records will show. (Copy in the Co. Clerk's Office, Suffolk, Va.) Eventually most of them had to have homes in N. C. or Maryland to escape persecution, notwithstanding the fact that the only Governor of Va. from Nansemond Co. was a Friend, and left much property for the upkeep of the poor, which is still so used 1937.

"This is about the best that I can give you, except that the trend of history in Va. south of the James and the early N. C. history show that the Baptists when persecution got too strong left the state and many found new homes in N. C. Example Elisha Battle of Edgecomb Co. the head of the Battle family of N. C."

1778

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY

County Seat—Heathsville

Some form of persecution prevailed in Richmond County for a period of years. Notice has already been taken of two cases in which Lewis Lunsford met with opposition in this county—one in 1773 and another in 1775. Now we come to chronicle a third

instance where this noble man of God was molested and such a disturbance created that he could not preach. This happened in Northumberland County, on August 9, 1778, the first account of which may be found in Semple's *History* (1810), page 418:

LEWIS LUNSFORD

*Meeting Broken Up by Banditte with Sticks
and Staves, and Pistols*

"After the repeal of the law for establishing one sect to the exclusion of the rest, a banditte attended Mr. Lunsford's meeting, with sticks and staves, to attack him. Just as he was about to begin to preach, they approached him for the attack. His irreligious friends, contrary to his wish, drew stakes out of a fence to defend him. This produced a great uproar and some skirmishes. Mr. Lunsford retired to a house. The persecutors pursued him. He shut himself up; and they were not hardy enough to break in to him."

Here is another account, evidently of the same meeting. The writer was an eye-witness to the disturbance and is therefore well qualified to speak of it. Dr. Geo. W. Beale's article entitled "Baptist Beginnings in Virginia," published in the *Religious Herald*, June 8, 1899, contains a partial quotation of Richard Dozier's manuscript journal, which is being preserved in the Virginia Baptist Historical Society's room, and in his journal Mr. Dozier states that he heard Lewis Lunsford preach at Mr. Hall's, on Sunday, August 9, 1778, and describes what happened:

"After he began his discourse a shocking tumult occurred and stopped him; some blows past; pistols presented, and the stage broke down. Mr. Lunsford in the mean time went to Mr. Hall's house. After many of us went to the house the persecutors came there and behaved very indecent. Mr. Lunsford continued upstairs till they were gone and then we went away. About 700 people at meeting."

Continuing Dr. Semple's account, we learn that:

"One of them desired to have the privilege of conversing with Mr. L. with a view of convincing him. He was let in; and did converse. When he came out, he wore a new face. His party asked him the result. You had better converse with him yourselves, said he."

Yet another account of this meeting, in which there are many details not found in the other references, is given on page 16 of Elder Henry Toler's funeral sermon of Lewis Lunsford. After relating some of Mr. Lunsford's experiences in 1775, Elder Toler says:

"In the following year 1776, the state legislature with great energy was petitioned, and compelled to repeal the law which had supported the Church of England by tax, which introduced and upheld these measures of persecution. But altho' that oppressive law was repealed the inclination of many to persecute was not removed. The power was gone, but the poison remained.

"Sometime after the abrogation of this law, there assembled a concourse on a Lord's day at Mr. Lunsford's meeting at a stage on Mr. Stephen Hall's land at Mundy's Point in Northumberland county, as against a thief, with implements of war to take him. After he had proceeded as far as to read his text, some that were armed drew near to do, it was not known what; whereupon some of the irreligious part of the assembly stood by him, some flew to a fence just by, took out the stakes, and (contrary to his advice to them) warmly resisted the opposers which terminated in vast tumult, and some skirmishes. Even women were enraged against the preacher. Major F-s on the part of the opposers mounted the stage with pistols where Mr. Lunsford stood, and (it is said) his mother, Mrs. F-s seeing the tumult, expressed fears that her son would be killed. But lawyer P-k-r endeavored to comfort her by saying, If he dies, it will be in a good cause. Some of Mr. Lunsford's religious friends advised him to go to the house, which he did while the uproar was going on at the stage, and he with a few others was shut up stairs, being speedily pursued by the opposers. One of which party, Mr. F-t, who had been forward in the opposition, then having pistols (it was said) with him, valuing himself as a sensible ready talker that he might with argument confute Mr. Lunsford, desired leave to converse with him up stairs, which was granted. When he returned, his party wished to know the purport of the conversation. He said, You had better converse with him yourselves (and I think it is said he added), Never man spake like this man. They answered him, Are ye also deceived? And then dispersed. Mr. F-t soon

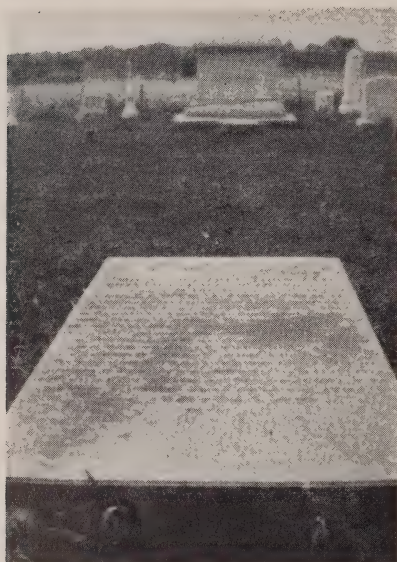
died rather suddenly, and it seems in his very short illness wished to see Mr. Lunsford again, but died without the sight."

Simple's *History* (1810), pages 420-422, has this to say about Mr. Lunsford's last days:

"This great, this good, this almost inimitable man, died, when only about forty years of age.

* * * * *

"The Dover Association, for the year 1793, was holden at Glebe landing meeting house in Middlesex county. This was nearly opposite to Mr. Lunsford, and the river excepted, probably not more than fifteen or eighteen miles from his house. Although just rising from a bilious attack, he would not stay from a place where his heart delighted to be, and where he had the best ground to believe he could do good. He went; and appeared so much better, that he made extensive appointment to preach in the lower parts of Virginia. He was chosen to preach on Sunday; and he did preach indeed. On Tuesday he came up to King and Queen, and preached at Bruington meeting house, from these words: *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober.* It was an awakening discourse, worthy of this masterly workman. On that day, he took cold and grew worse. He however preached his last sermon the next day evening: Observing when he began 'It may be improper for me to attempt to preach at this time; but, as long as I have any strength remaining, I wish to preach the gospel of Christ; and I will very gladly spend and be spent for you.' He then preached his last sermon from: '*Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*' He continued to grow worse, until, having arrived at Mr. Gregory's in Essex, he took his bed, from whence he was carried to the grave. In his sickness, he was remarkably silent; having little to say, which he could avoid. He was fond of joining in prayer; and sometimes exerted his now relaxed mind, in making remarks worthy of such a man. He expressed some anxiety, at the thought of leaving his helpless family; but appeared quite resigned for the will of heaven to take place. On the 26th of October, 1793, he fell asleep in the arms of Jesus, aged about forty years."



GRAVESTONE OF LEWIS LUNSFORD
at Morattico Baptist Church

Lewis Lunsford was born in Stafford County about the year 1753, was baptized while yet a youth by Elder William Fristoe, began to exhort when about eighteen years of age, and such large crowds came to hear him that he was dubbed "the Wonderful Boy." He died at Mr. Gregory's, in Essex county, within forty miles of his own home, and his remains were interred on the farm of Mrs. T. Scott, four miles from Tappahannock. Two funeral sermons by Elder Henry Toler were published and extensively circulated, and he was further

commemorated with a marble slab placed over his grave by his churches in 1848. The inscription on this recumbent memorial is as follows:

"In the year of our Lord 1848
This monumental slab
was placed over the mortal remains of

Rev. Lewis Lunsford.

By the Baptist churches of Moraticco
and Lebanon, in Lancaster and Coan
and Fairfield, in Northumberland Co.
Va.

As well to designate to future generations
the spot of his interment, as to testify
the high veneration of the said churches
for the memory of the deceased.

He was born in the county of
Stafford about the year 1753;
was chosen and ordained to the
care of Morattico church on the

7th of March 1778.
And died from home at Mr. Gregory's
in Essex, on the 26th of Oct. 1793;
Aged about 40 years."

His remains and this marble slab were moved in 1928 from their original resting place, and placed in the cemetery of the Morattico Church, in Lancaster County, where the photograph was taken that appears in this history.

1778

ACCOMAC COUNTY

County Seat—Accomac

Our investigations have now brought us to the last case of imprisonment, in Virginia, for preaching the Gospel. And strange to say it has to do with one of the earliest ministers. Most of the Virginia counties had long before abandoned the practice as it was not only useless, but it was found to inure decidedly to the advantage of the cause they sought to suppress. Taylor's biographical sketch of Elijah Baker, page 110, Second edition (1838), states, "Through his instrumentality, all the churches between Hampton and Richmond city, were originated, and several on the eastern shore. His efforts in the counties of Henrico, New Kent, &c. down to Warwick, were of the most indefatigable kind. In this region he spent the year 1773, and the two following years. He labored also in the county of Gloucester." But he seems to have escaped the clutches of the law until he crossed to the Eastern Shore, and there accomplished such a great work. In the same edition of Taylor's *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, page 113, it is stated that:

"It might be expected that such a course of successful labor would meet with opposition. At one period the hostility which the servants of Jesus experienced was of the most determined character. Elder Baker was counted worthy to share in this hostility. He realized the most cruel treatment. For several days he was confined in Accomac jail. None of these things moved him. He not only maintained his steadfastness, but increased in activity and boldness, in preaching Christ and him crucified."

ELIJAH BAKER

Imprisoned Fifty-six Days

Elijah Baker, like other Virginia Baptist preachers, was charged with "vagrancy," but his case is the first thus far found in which the "Church Wardens" are set down as the "Plaintiff." They were often the complaining party and the chief abettors in the apprehension and incarceration of these men of God, but it is singular that in no other case, until the last one on record, are they set down in the Court's record as such.

In the Order Book of Accomac County for 1777-1780, on page 90 may be found an account of the Court's proceedings, which, let it be noticed, occurred two years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence:

"At a Court held by adjournment in Accomack County
the 27th day of May 1778.

Present

Smith Simpson

Thomas Teackle

John Smith

Thomas Bayley

& Clement Parker Gent.

Church Wardens

vs.

Elijah Baker Def;

} On a recognizance for Vagrancy.

"This day came as well the Attorney for the Common Wealth as the Said Elijah in his proper person & on hearing him by Griffith Stith his Attorney It is considered that the same be continued for tryal till next Court at the Deft's cost— And it is further Ordered that the said Def: enter into recognixance with good & sufficent security in the Sum of One hundred pounds Virginia currency payable to the Governor of this State & his successors that is to say the Said Elijah in the Sum of Fifty pounds & William Gibb his security in the Sum of fifty pounds to be levied of their respective Goods & Chattels, Lands & Tenements upon the express condition that the said Elijah do depart this County as soon as convenient & that he do not presume to preach therein until he produce proper Credentials to the Court whereupon he together with William Gibb his security recognized accordingly."

The next entry on the Court's records of this case is found in the same Order Book, pages 99 and 102, and is as follows:

"At a Court held for Accomack County by adjournment the 1st day of July 1778.

Present

Southly Simpson

Clement Parker

Henry Fletcher

Nath'l Beavans

Thomas Bayley & John Custis Gent.

Church Wardens Accomack &c

vs.

Elijah Baker, Deft

} On a recognizance for
vagrancy.

"This day came as well the Attorney for the Common Wealth as the said Deft by James Henry his Attorney & on hearing the matter of Complaint—It is ordered that he be continued bound until the next Court—And on the motion of William Gibb his former security praying that he may be discharged—It is ordered that he be discharged from his securityship and that the said Baker give new security also that the Sheriff take him into Custody till such security be given, &c."

Mr. Baker continued in jail until Court Day when the case was called and continued, this brief account being entered on the records, in the same Order Book, pages 136 and 137:

"At a Court held for Accomack County the 29th day of July, 1778.

Present

Southly Simpson

Thomas Bayley

Thomas Teackle

Clement Parker

& John Custis Gent.

Commonwealth

vs.

Elijah Baker, Def.

} for vagrancy

"The same is continued for tryal till next Court at Deft's costs."

It will be noticed by the reader that the "Church Wardens" and the "Commonwealth" seem to be interchangeable terms, or perhaps the "Church Wardens" had by this time become ashamed of

themselves and decided to prosecute the case no further, causing the Clerk to continue it another month under the name of the "Commonwealth." But when they failed to appear at the August court it looks as if the Clerk, by the manner in which he records the case, hurled with a vengeance the responsibility for the whole disgraceful procedure back on the shoulders of the former "Complainants." One can almost see him bear down a little heavier on his quill pen as he writes out in full detail the source of this persecution. The same Order Book, on page 185, has this brief but significant record:

"At a Court held for Accomack County the 25th day of August, 1778.

Present

Southy Simpson Nath'l Beavans
John Custis & William Downing Gent

The Church Wardens of Accomack Parish	}	On a recog- nizance for vagrancy.
vs		
Elijah Baker Deft,		

Dismissed."

Rev. Robert Williamson is the author of *A Brief History of the Origin and Progress of the Baptist on the Eastern Shore of Virginia*, in which he has this to say about Elijah Baker's imprisonment in Accomac:

"Thus it appears that this man of God was for the truth's sake imprisoned from the 1st of July until the 25th of August, 1778, a period of fifty-six days, or nearly two months. And this took place during the Revolution, when our forefathers were nobly battling for freedom. Strange anomaly that men who thought it to be their right and duty to sacrifice life and property for political and civil liberty, should deny their fellows liberty of conscience. Yet so it was. It was during this year of severe persecution, whether before or after his imprisonment is now unknown, that Mr. Baker succeeded in constituting the first Baptist church ever formed upon this peninsula."

From the same authority we learn that this humble Baptist preacher suffered other indignities besides imprisonment. Mr. Williamson states that:

ELIJAH BAKER

Pelted with Apples and Stones

"Mr. Baker had to encounter much opposition. He was sometimes pelted with apples and even with stones while engaged in preaching."

Perhaps the most insolent and audacious interference with the work of this good man was the attempt made by a body of ruffians to banish him; an account of which is found in Volume Nine of *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, on page 60 of the "History of the Baptists in Delaware," by Rev. Morgan Edwards:

ELIJAH BAKER

Attempt Made to Deport Him

"Rev. Elijah Baker is a native of Virginia, where he suffered much for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. The cause of his coming to this State was an invitation from Thomas Batston, Esq., who had heard him preach (through a window of Accomac jail) about the year 1778. The rude Virginians (in order to silence him) took him out of jail and put him on board a privateer, with orders to land him on any coast out of America. He was compelled to work, and for his refusing and praying and preaching and singing was ill used. The privateer put him on board another ship, but the wind keeping contrary still, they began to think that it was owing to their having poor Baker in the harbor; therefore that other ship put him on board a third, and the third put him ashore. When Jonas found himself on the dry land, he remembered Squire Batston's invitation and hastened to his house; this good Squire died this day, March 19, 1791. His companion in travels (Mr. Hughes) has promised me a full history of this extraordinary man, which he has not performed, though I have *stirred up his pure mind* to it in three letters; but it will come into the history of the Baptists in Virginia."

It will be noticed that the above account mentions three ships, whereas Dr. Semple mentions only one, and includes the state-

ment that the captain on hearing him preach put him ashore "without delay." Perhaps some future historian will discover evidence that will explain the seeming discrepancy. Dr. Semple's account, 1810 edition, page 385, is as follows :

"In doing so much good, it fell to Mr. Baker's portion (as generally happens) to give offence to the enemy of souls and his subordinate agents. They put him in Accomac prison, and kept him there many days. The most atrocious attempt was that of seizing him by a lawless power, and carrying him on board of a vessel in the adjacent waters ; where they left him : having contracted with the captain to make him work his passage over the seas, and then leave him in some of the countries of Europe ; alledging *that he was a disturber of the peace*. This took place on Saturday night. He was immediately put to work, and kept at it until late at night. The next day, being Sunday, he asked and obtained leave of the captain to sing and pray among the crew. The Captain attended ; and was convinced that he was a good man. Without delay he set him on shore. In the mean time, his friends had dispatched a messenger to the governor, to obtain authority to prevent his being carried forcibly away. This they obtained ; but Mr. B. was discharged before his return. He met with various kinds of persecution ; which only served to confirm his faith, and whet his zeal in his Redeemer's cause."

In *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association* (pages 278 and 279), by Elders Lemuel Burkitt and Jesse Read, there is a similar statement :

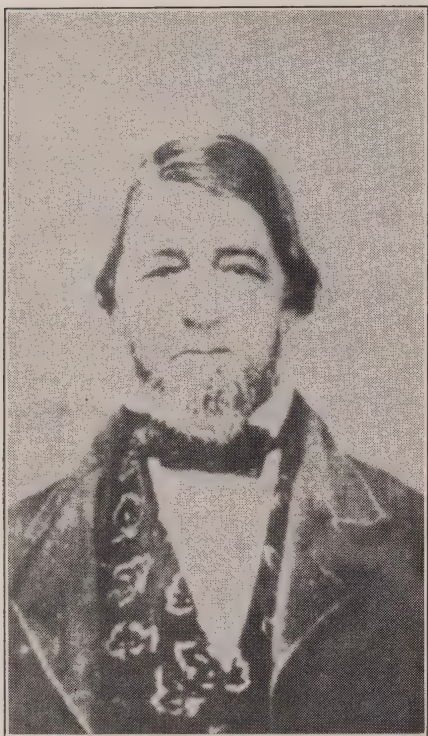
"He suffered great persecution in his first attempts to spread the gospel in the lower parts of Virginia. He was once seized by a giddy set of ruffians, where he was preaching, who took him by violence, and carried him on board of a vessel, informing the captain, he 'was a disturber of the peace,' and wished him to make him work for his passage over the seas, and leave him in some of the European countries, as an exile. It was on Saturday night he was carried on board ; and was put to work, and continued till late at

night. Next morning he came before the captain, and begged liberty, as it was the Lord's day, to go to prayer amongst the people on deck. He was gratified; and he exhorted and prayed, and the Captain heard him. He thought Elder Baker a good man, and was determined not to humour the spiteful mob; but ordered his people to put him on shore. In the mean while his friends, had dispatched a messenger to the Governor, stating facts, in order to prevent Elder Baker's banishment. But when the messenger returned with the Governor's orders to the captain to release Baker; behold it was done. He was often threatened to be mobbed; and sometimes apples thrown at him while preaching; but out of it all, the Lord delivered him; and by his labours a glorious work of God was begun, and carried on, on the Eastern shore of Virginia."

Rev. John Leland wrote Dr. Semple while the latter was preparing his *History*, that Elijah Baker was "a man of low parentage, small learning and confined abilities. But with one talent, he did more than many do with five. If justice could be done his memory, the detail would make a rich page in your intended history." (Semple's *History* (1810), p. 396.)

Elijah Baker was born in Lunenburg County, in 1748; was baptized by Elder Samuel Harriss in 1769; joined the Amelia (Nottoway) Church, and at the constitution of the Meherrin Church in 1771, became one of its constituent members. "Immediately after his baptism he began to recommend Him in whom he had found so much consolation." We have touched upon his remarkable work on the peninsula between the James and the York rivers. He spent several years in the county of Gloucester and crossed to the Eastern Shore where he was so fiercely persecuted. He died at the home of his friend, Dr. Richard Lemmon, November 6, 1798, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. Presumably he was buried on Dr. Lemmon's place, but a thorough search for his grave in 1916, by Rev. J. M. Pilcher, D. D., proved fruitless. (See article in *Religious Herald* of January 4, 1917.)

Dying at Dr. Lemmon's, it would seem most appropriate to quote here the Doctor's own words respecting him, found in a letter he wrote Dr. Semple:



ELDER ELIJAH BAKER

“In Mr. Baker, I found the Israelite indeed, the humble christian; the preacher of the gospel in the simplicity of it; and the triumphant saint, in his last moments. In his preaching, he was very plain; and generally experimental; always very express on the doctrine of regeneration; never entering upon the doctrines by which he conceived he should give offense to one or another. In his last illness, I attended his bed side, day and night, for three weeks; and had many most agreeable conversations with him, on the glorious things of the kingdom of Christ. He retained his senses to the last minute; and seemed rather

translated, than to suffer pain in his dissolution. Death was to him as familiar in his conversation, as if he talked of an absent friend from whom he expected a visit.” (*Semple’s History* (1810), p. 397.)

For the picture of Elijah Baker which appears in this volume the author is indebted to the Hon. Ben T. Gunter, a prominent citizen and Baptist of Accomac, Virginia, who also relates in the following letter how it was secured:

“When I was preparing a historical sketch of the Accomac Association, I sought some information from a Mr. Edward Coulbourn, of Cape Charles, who is connected with the Old School Baptists, as we knew them over here and who went off to themselves, thinking that he might have some records

of that branch of Baptist folks. He wrote me that he did not have any of the historical data, but that he had a photograph of Mr. Elijah Baker that had been handed down to him through his family. He very kindly let me have this photograph and I had it copied and the cut made from the copy. It is at least a very good reproduction of the original."

Dr. J. M. Pilcher wrote another article for the *Religious Herald*, in the issue of March 15, 1923, under the following heading: "Presbyterian Interest vs. Baptist Indifference." In this article Dr. Pilcher recounts his fruitless search for the grave of Elijah Baker and expresses the strong conviction that the Baptists of the Eastern Shore should do for the memory of Elijah Baker what the Presbyterians of that section have done for Francis Makemie.

"I found every spot of interest in his career in that county (Northampton), but I could not find his grave. Dr. Lemmon's cemetery, in which he was buried, had, when I went to Salisbury, Md., been sold and streets laid off and houses built, and 'no man knoweth his sepulchre unto this day.'

"So much labor, so many churches planted, the Salisbury Association organized, burial place unknown, no lineal representative living, almost entirely forgotten by the Baptists of the Eastern Shore, his memory ought to be cherished by us and perpetuated on the Eastern Shore as worthily as has been done for the memory of Makemie."

Two years later the pastor of the Drummontown Baptist Church, located at Accomac Court House, Virginia, Dr. J. T. Edwards preached a sermon bearing on a memorial to Elijah Baker, and on October 19, 1932, writing from Culpeper, Virginia, he answered the author's inquiry relative to this memorial, one paragraph of his letter being as follows:

"This movement began from a sermon I preached at the annual meeting in 1925, on Baptist history—'The Little Baptist Cloud'—that became a rainstorm. I suggested that a fitting memorial to Elijah Baker would be such a monument. Dr. Ryland was present and heard the sermon and gave his approval. The result was this memorial—it was

paid for before unveiled and cost about \$500.00. It is located on the church yard of the Drummontown Baptist Church (located at Accomac C. H.) not far from the old jail that still stands."

This memorial to Elijah Baker consists of a granite slab on a pedestal of the same material, the total height being about six feet, and on the face of the monument there is a bronze tablet with the inscription:

"Elijah Baker

Pioneer Baptist

of the

Eastern Shore of Virginia

Who landed at Hunt's Point, Old Plantation Creek, on Easter Sunday 1776 and the same day preached the first Baptist sermon 'At the end of a Horsing Tree.' Opposition of the Established Church caused him to be deported; but kind Providence brought him back. He was later imprisoned 56 days in the Old Debtors' Jail at Accomac for the crime of preaching the Gospel.

(Acts iv:19, 20)

In gratitude for the rich heritage that is ours.

Because of his suffering and imprisonment, This Memorial is erected by the churches of the Accomac Baptist Association."

In the Bicentennial Edition of Charles J. Truitt's *Historic Salisbury Maryland* (1932), this reference to Elijah Baker may be found:

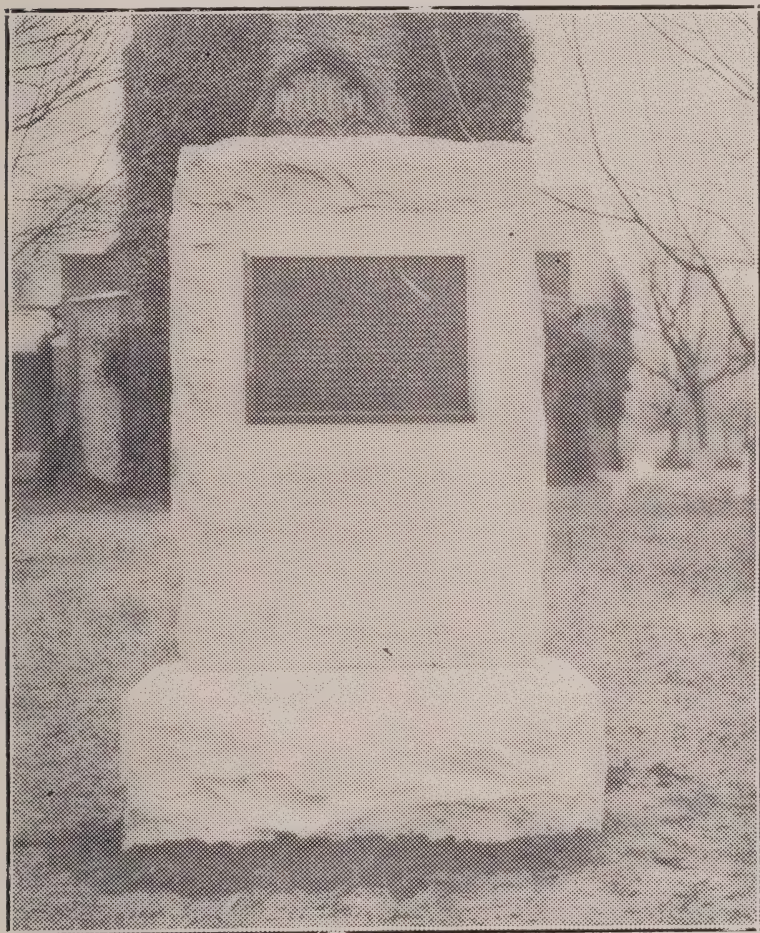
"A continuous record of the proceedings of the Baptist church from 1799 is held in possession of the clerk to the Board of Trustees of the Old School Baptist church here. Previous to that date no minutes were written or they have been lost.

"As an introduction to the register of the meeting October 19, 1799, we find these interesting historical facts:

" 'Baptist sentiments were first propagated in this region by the pious and labourious Elijah Baker, as related in his

biography. Soon after he began to preach in these parts, he was joined by Philip Hughes, whose ministry was crowned with much success.

“These two ministers laboured on the Eastern Shore, both in Maryland and Virginia, rather as evangelical itinerates than as stationed pastors and often visited the churches they had planted as fathers do their children. A number of ministers and exhorters were raised up in the



MONUMENT TO ELIJAH BAKER AT ACCOMAC COURT HOUSE

churches they had established, who were instrumental in forwarding the work they had begun.

"Mr. E. Baker, it appears, first visited these parts in 1776; in 1782 a sufficient number of churches having been organized they met at Salisbury, and formed themselves into an association, which from that circumstance it received its name.'

"The register shows that in 1799 and for several years thereafter the Salisbury church was attended by Daniel Handcock and John Benston 'alternately one in two weeks.'

"Some of the earliest recorded meetings were held at the home of Dr. Richard Lemmon and for a century 'Lemmon Hill' was a hallowed place for devout Baptists.

On the lawn of the place stood, until the fire of 1886, a great white oak, measuring 10 feet in diameter, known as 'Baptist Tree.' Here, it is said, Elijah Baker preached the first Baptist sermon on the eastern Shore. To this tree Baptists of the Eastern Shore customarily conducted an annual pilgrimage."

This imprisonment of Elijah Baker occurred two years after the General Assembly of Virginia had passed a law which was designed to place all denominations upon the same footing. In an illuminating paper by Dr. William Taylor Thom entitled, *The Struggles for Religious Freedom in Virginia—the Baptists*, on page 57 he states:

"The first General Assembly of the State of Virginia met in Williamsburg on Monday, October 7, 1776. Among the early enactments was a bill which swept away all existing parliamentary laws restricting liberty to religious opinion and worship. This was done in part in response to the public demand as shown in petitions from many sources."

Then he gives the petitions which originated from Baptist sources.

The preamble to the act adopted at this session exempting the different societies of dissenters from contributing to the support and maintenance of the Established Church, is as follows:

"I. Whereas several oppressive acts of Parliament respecting religion have been formerly enacted, and doubts have

arisen, and may hereafter arise, whether the same are in force in this Commonwealth or not: For prevention whereof, BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, AND IT IS HEREBY ENACTED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE SAME, That all and every act of Parliament, by whatever title known or distinguished, which renders criminal the maintaining any opinions in matters of religion, forbearing to repair to church or the exercising any mode of worship whatsoever, or which prescribes punishments for the same, shall henceforth be of no force or validity within this Commonwealth.

"II. And whereas there are within this Commonwealth great numbers of dissenters from the Church Establishment by law who have been heretofore taxed for its support, and it is contrary to the principles of reason and justice that any should be compelled to contribute to the maintenance of a Church with which their consciences will not permit them to join, and from which they can therefore receive no benefit: For remedy whereof, and that equal liberty, as well religious as civil, may be universally extended to all the good people of this Commonwealth, BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, AND IT IS HEREBY ENACTED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE SAME, That all dissenters of whatever denomination from the said Church shall, from and after the passing of this act, be totally free and exempt from all levies, taxes and impositions whatever towards supporting and maintaining the said Church as it now is or hereafter may be established, and its ministers." (Beale's *Semple* (1894), pp. 495-496.)

And yet four years later our Baptist forefathers were still struggling to bring about absolute equality among all sects and denominations. As a sample of the kind of remonstrances that were being made at that time, here follows the one drawn up and signed by Elder Jeremiah Walker, who had achieved such phenomenal success at Nottoway Church and was later imprisoned in Chesterfield jail for preaching the gospel in that county. The original has been preserved and is on file in the Archives Department of the Virginia State Library among the Colonial papers. It is signed by Elder Walker and thirty-four other inhabitants,

many of whom were no doubt members of the Nottoway Baptist Church :

“To the Honourable the Speaker and House of Delegates the Memorial of sundry Inhabitants of Amelia County, humbly representeth,

“That notwithstanding the glorious Advances made towards equal Religious Liberty in this Commonwealth, some vestiges of the old Partiality towards a particular Denomination of Christians, remain yet untaken away ; as,

“First, the Continuation of Vestries, formed by Persons who cannot be supposed to act for the People at large as their Choice, when under the clogging Qualifications of subscribing to be conformable to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England.

“Secondly ; the Form of directing Marriage-Licenses only to Ministers of the Church of England, on which account, and because the Clergy of the church have claimed it as their sole Privilege, many have been induced to believe that Marriages otherwise solemnized are invalid ; that the children who are the Issue of such Marriages are illegitimate, under an Incapacity to inherit &c.,

“Your Memorialists therefore move you, that the Vestries in the several Parishes may be dissolved, and elected hereafter by the free Voice of the People—that Marriage-Licenses may be directed to any Minister regularly ordained according to the Rules of their Society—and that an Act may pass declaring marriages solemnized by dissenting ministers without the Use of the Ring and the Service prescribed in the common Prayer-Book lawful ; that every Doubt of their Validity may be removed, and the good people of this State acquainted with their just Rights.”

This “Memorial,” dated May 5, 1780, appears to be in the hand-writing of Jeremiah Walker, his signature appearing first, followed by that of Simeon Walton, Joseph Fowlkes, and thirty-two others. Jeremiah Walker was frequently one of those appointed by Baptist Associations to present memorials and remonstrances to the General Assembly, and Dr. Semple says that “it is probable few men could make gewgaws look more like jewels than Jeremiah Walker.”

On October 16, 1780, while the Baptist Association was in session at Sandy Creek, in Charlotte County, a "Memorial" was drawn up and addressed "To the Honourable the Speaker and House of Delegates," which bears the ear marks of Jeremiah Walker's Amelia Petition. It mentions the Vestries and the Solemnization of Marriages as chief grievances, and closes with the following paragraph:

"Your Memorialists humbly hope that your Honourable House will take effectual Measures to redress these Grievances in such a Way as may manifest an equal Regard to all the good People of this Commonwealth, however diversyfyed by Appellations or Religious Sentiments; and that, as it is your Glory to represent a free People, you will be as forward to remove every just Cause of Offence as your Constituents are to complain of them; and in particular that you will consign to Oblivion all the Relicks of Religious Oppression, and make a public Sacrifice of Partiality at the glorious Altar of Freedom.

"Signed by order

Sam'l Harriss, Mod'r

John Williams, Clk."

(Beale's *Semple* (1894), pp. 498-499.)

A footnote in Beale's *Semple*, page 449, states:

"At the October session of the General Assembly, 1780, an act was passed providing:

"That it shall and may be lawful for any minister of any society or congregation of Christians . . . to celebrate the rites of matrimony . . . and such marriages, *as well as those hereafter celebrated by dissenting ministers*, shall be, and they are hereby, declared good and valid in law'." (*Hen. Statutes at Large*, Vol. X, p. 363.)

Having secured *exemption from taxation for the support of the church of the Establishment* and *redress from the inequalities in marriages* a new and more formidable foe was encountered. It came in the form of a bill for a *General Assessment* for all religious denominations, and seemed so plausible that many of the elect were deceived by its provisions,—even Washington, Marshall, Patrick Henry and Richard Henry Lee were in favor of

To the Honourable the Speaker and the Gentlemen of
the House of Delegates

The petition of the Inhabitants of the County of Caroline humbly sheweth
That whereas it hath pleased your Honourable House to publish a bill
Alleging the Inhabitants of this county are at the taking the Teachers of
the Christian Religion and have required their Oath concerning it.
your Petitioners do most earnestly declare against it, believing that
the Legislature should not establish masters Religion, nor the way
of supporting it to have been that all masters Religion should be supported
and determined by the different Religious Societies and their members
supporting it by voluntary contribution. That when ever civil power
shall take Interference in matters of Religion to regulate and determine
the manner of doing in, we shall as it all tax the Inhabitants of this state
for the support of the teachers of the Christian Religion they have separated from
the spirit of the Gospel and from the bill of Rights. We own it at that time
Religious should not only not that the aid of civil power, but against all the
powers of the Earth supported and supported the Gospel several thousand years
hence we have seen to have it a perfect that it must fall if not established by human
Law. When Christianity was first established by the first Christian King
Kings was the Church overruled with civil superstition and immorality, here
we have more ministers than to church and state and both in purity
of Doctrine and uprightness of life.

And that Religious establishment and Government is linked together
And that the latter cannot exist without the former is contrary to
Experience. Witness the state of Pennsylvania wherein no such
Establishment hath taken place, their Government stands firm
And even any of the Neighbouring states boast of men of better morals
and more upright Character.

John Young
Melch. Brown
Charles Mason
Jno. Peat
John Child
W. Drame
Isaac Francis
Joseph Valentine

Francis McGraw
Stephen Munn
J. M. Young
Jas. Smith
James Peabody
Henry Barlow
Saml. Barnes
David Maxon

COPY OF THE ORIGINAL CAROLINE PETITION AGAINST THE
GENERAL ASSESSMENTS

it. They perhaps thought it would unite the various factions and thus pour oil on the troubled waters of ecclesiastical differences. But the principle was wrong in the opinion of our Baptist forefathers who were not deceived by the prospect of any benefit they might have received from it and who therefore stood steadily, unitedly and actively against it. They began to circulate petitions opposing the bill. Some of the other denominations joined forces with the Baptists in an effort to defeat the measure, and there were those who belonged to no church at all who did not want a law passed compelling them to pay a tax for the support of any religious teacher.

The character of the petitions which were circulated among Baptists to obtain signatures of those opposed to the Bill for a General Assessment for Religious Teachers may be learned by referring to the original Caroline County petition which is being preserved in the Archives Department of the Virginia State Library, and is labeled "Petition No. 1299." This petition is, we think, in the hand-writing of Elder Jeremiah Walker, is signed by one hundred and forty-three persons, with Elder John Young (who spent four months in the Caroline jail), heading the list. The petition gives several reasons why our Baptist people were opposed to this General Assessment:

"To the Honourable the Speaker and the Gentlemen of the House of Delegates—

"The petition of the Inhabitants of the County of Caroline humbly sheweth

That whereas it hath pleased your Honourable House to publish a bill Obliging the Inhabitants of this commonwealth to pay the Teachers of the Christian Religion and have required their Opinion concerning it,

Your Petitioners do most earnestly declare against it, believing that the Legislature should not establish modes of Religion, nor the manner of supporting its teachers, that all modes of Religion should be regulated And determined by the Different Religious Societies: and the manner of Supporting it by Voluntary Contribution, That when ever the Civil power Shall so far Interfere in matters of Religion as to regulate and Determine The manner of divine worship,

or shall tax the Inhabitants of this state for the support of the teachers of the Christian Religion they have Departed from the Spirit of the Gospel and from the bill of Rights, Certain it is that our Blessed Saviour not only without the aid of Civil power, but against all the powers of the Earth supported and Defended his Gospel several Hundred years, how strange then, to hear it Asserted that it must fall, if not established by human Laws. When Christianity was first established by the first Christian King How soon was the church overrun with error Superstition and immorality, how unlike were ministers then to what they were in time past both in purity of Doctrine and uprightness of life - - -

“That Religious establishment and Government is Linked together - - -

“And that the latter cannot exist without the former is Contrary to Experience. Witness the state of Pennsylvania wherein no such Establishment hath taken place: their Government stands firm.

“And can any of the Neighboring states boast of men of better morals And more upright Characters.”

Then follow the signatures. On the back of the petition are some statements which seem to be intended to meet the arguments advanced in favor of the General Assessment:

“But tis said Religion is taking its flight and that Deism prevails—

“This cannot be owing to the want of Religious Establishment, but to other causes. Let your Laws punish the Vices of the times, and let there not be wanting such men in power and Authority, who by their pious Examples Shall recommend Religion, and by their faithfulness shall stop the growth of immorality let ministers convince the world that they are moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them that Office, that they seek the good of mankind And not worldly Interest. Let their Doctrines be scriptural and their lives Holy, then shall Religion beam forth as the sun and Deism shall be put to open shame - - -

“Such Assessment would introduce no more useful and faithful men into the ministry, those whom Divine Grace hath Called to that work will esteem it their highest honour to do his pleasure - - -

"Likely it would call into the Church a number of hirelings, whose Chief motive would be worldly Interest - - -

"Our Bill of Rights which says that no person in the common Wealth shall enjoy exclusive privileges except for services rendered the state, certainly forbids such tax, since this is not for services Rendered to Government, which may as well exist without it - - -

"As such Assessment therefore Appears to be contrary to the spirit of the Gospel and the bill of rights, and is big with pernicious Consequences to the Church of Christ, Your petitioners trust that the Wisdom and uprightness of your Honourable House will ever leave them Intirely free in all matters of Religion and the manner of Supporting its Teachers, And they shall ever pray."

It was a close fight for although more than 10,000 signers were obtained to the anti-assessment petitions the bill was defeated by only three votes.

In this struggle Jefferson and Madison stood with the Baptists and others who opposed the General Assessment plan, and Madison's strong Memorial and Remonstrance may have had great weight in deciding the issue. One of the Baptist preachers, Jeremiah Moore, who suffered imprisonment in the town of Alexandria for preaching the Gospel recalled fifteen years later how he and others had put the petition of 10,000 subscribers into Mr. Jefferson's own hands.

In a letter written by Jeremiah Moore, on July 12, 1800, from "Moorefield," Fairfax County, Virginia (the original of which is in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., and a photostatic copy in the *Virginia Baptist Historical Society*, University of Richmond, Virginia), there is a reference to an early incident in the struggle for Religious Liberty. The letter is addressed to Thomas Jefferson and the last paragraph is as follows:

"The part you took against the Religious Establishment when I had the honour with others of putting a petition into your hands signed by 10,000 subscribers praying the dissolution of these tyrannical chains still lives in my memory and has sometimes afforded me pleasure in being able to say without doubt that you were a friend to religious liberty.

and it would add to my happiness to (be) able to say with equal certainty that you were a friend to a general mode of suffrage in opposition to that partial one which now prevails in the Commonwealth—I have no apology to plead for the intrusion this schrole will make on your time and patience but your own goodness which I trust will pardon the liberty I have taken, and I have no doubt that you have been intruded on at some time of your life by men whose motives might not be more pure than those that occupy the heart of your obt Hble Svt

Jeremiah Moore.”

The petition referred to above must have been the one presented in 1785 against the assessment plan. Dr. H. J. Eckenrode's Special Report of the Department of Archives and History, on the Separation of Church and State in Virginia (1910), page 111, states that:

“The whole number of subscribers to the anti-assessment petitions was not less than 10,000, and the number may have been even larger.”

William Warren Sweet's *The Story of Religions in America* (1930), pages 277-279, contains this reference to the struggle for Religious Liberty, which is a fitting summary of its final stages and a worthy tribute to our Baptist forefathers:

“The final struggle over the issue (Religious Liberty) came between the years 1779 and 1785. In the former year several bills were offered, among them one prepared by Thomas Jefferson which was finally to be written into the laws of Virginia, as the ‘Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom.’ But the road to the passage of the famous measure was long and painful, and for six years it was discussed pro and con both in and out of legislative halls. In 1784 the cause was almost lost through the introduction of a bill providing for a general assessment for the teaching of religion. According to the measure, persons might declare the denomination to which they wished their assessment to go, but if no declaration were made the money would be used to encourage schools in their respective counties. Washington could see nothing wrong with the measure and it was likewise supported by Marshall, Patrick Henry and Richard

Henry Lee, but Madison and Jefferson were against it. At first certain of the Presbyterian clergy favored it, but as usual the Baptists saw the flaw in the measure and stood staunchly in opposition. Madison writing to Monroe concerning the situation, states: 'The Episcopal people are generally for it though I think the zeal of some of them has cooled. The laity of the other sects are generally unanimous on the other side. So are all the clergy except the Presbyterians, who seem as ready to set up an establishment which is to take them in as they were to pull down that which shut them out.' The Baptists, however, standing firmly by their avowed principle of the complete separation of church and state, declared it 'to be repugnant to the spirit of the Gospel for the Legislature thus to proceed in matters of religion, that no human laws ought to be established for the purpose.' The Hanover Presbytery now passed strong resolutions opposing the bill which were later approved by the Virginia Presbyterian Convention. This combined opposition finally succeeded in defeating the measure though by a majority of only three votes.

"The way was now open for the final victory and on December 17, 1785, Jefferson's measures was passed, and on January 19, 1786, was signed by the Speaker and became law.

Section II reads thus:

"We the General Assembly of Virginia, do enact that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested or burdened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or effect their civil capacities.'

"Religious freedom had triumphed in Virginia and was soon to spread throughout the nation, and a few years later in the form of the first amendment to the Federal Constitution was to become a part of the fundamental law of the land. At the time of the passage of the measure Jefferson, its author, was in France, but so proud was he of his part in the memorable struggle that he asked that it be recorded on his tombstone: 'Thomas Jefferson, Author of the Dec-

laration of Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia.' But justice compels the admission that Jefferson's part in this accomplishment was not so great as was that of James Madison, nor were the contributions of either or both as important as was that of the humble people called Baptists."

When on August 8, 1789, the General Committee of the United Baptist Churches of Virginia, sent their congratulations to President George Washington upon his appointment to the first office of the nation, this reference to freedom of conscience may be found :

"When the Constitution first made its appearance in Virginia, we, as a society, had unusual strugglings of mind, fearing that the liberty of conscience (dearer to us than property and life) was not sufficiently secured; perhaps our jealousies were heightened on account of the usage we received in Virginia under the British Government when mobs, bonds, fines and prisons were our frequent repast.

"Convinced on the one hand that without an effective national government the States would fall into disunion and all the consequent evils; on the other hand it was feared we might be accessory to some religious oppression, should any one society in the Union preponderate all the rest. But midst all the inquietudes of mind, our consolation arose from this consideration, the plan must be good for it bears the signature of a *tried, trusty friend*; and if religious liberty is rather insecure in the Constitution, 'the administration will prevent all oppression, for a WASHINGTON will preside.' According to our wishes the unanimous voice of the Union has called you, sir, from your beloved retreat, to launch forth again into the faithless seas of human affairs, to guide the helm of the States. Should the horrid evils that have been so pestiferous in Asia and Europe—faction, ambition, war, perfidy, fraud and persecutions for conscience sake—ever approach the borders of our happy nation, may the name and administration of our beloved President, like the radiant source of day, scatter all those dark clouds from the American hemisphere." (The full Address, which was too long for this work, is signed by Samuel Harriss as Moderator and Reuben Ford as Clerk, and may be found in Beale's *Temple* (1894), pp. 484-487.)

President Washington replied to the hearty felicitations of these Baptist pioneers, as follows :

“To the General Committee representing the United Baptist Churches in Virginia :

“Gentlemen,—I request that you will accept my best acknowledgments for your congratulation on my appointment to the first office in the nation. The kind manner in which you mention my past conduct equally claims the expression of my gratitude. After we had, by the smiles of Divine Providence on our exertions, obtained the object for which we contended, I retired at the conclusion of the war with the idea that my country could have no farther occasion for my services, and with the intention of never entering again into public life ; but when the exigencies of my country seemed to require me once more to engage in public affairs, an honest conviction of duty superseded my former resolution and became my apology for deviating from the happy plan which I had adopted.

“If I could have entertained the slightest apprehension that the Constitution framed in the convention where I had the honor to preside might possibly endanger the religious rights of any ecclesiastical society, certainly I would never have placed my signature to it ; and if I could now conceive that the General Government might ever be administered as to render the liberty of conscience insecure, I beg you will be persuaded that no one would be more zealous than myself to establish effectual barriers against the horrors of spiritual tyranny and every species of religious persecution.

“For you doubtless remember I have often expressed my sentiments that every man conducting himself as a good citizen, and being accountable to God alone for his religious opinions, ought to be protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of his own conscience.

“While I recollect with satisfaction that the religious society of which you are members have been throughout America, uniformly and almost unanimously, the firm friends to civil liberty, and the persevering promoters of our glorious revolution, I cannot hesitate to believe that they will be faithful supporters of a free yet efficient General Government. Under this pleasing expectation I rejoice to assure them that

they may rely upon my best wishes and endeavors to advance their prosperity.

"In the meantime be assured, gentlemen, that I entertain a proper sense of your fervent supplication to God for my temporal and eternal happiness.

"I am, gentlemen, your most obedient servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON."

(Beale's *Semple* (1894), pp. 487-489.)

The battle had been fought and won—yet not completely so. Religious equality had been secured, but the boon which Virginia Baptists sought for themselves and for all others was *absolute religious freedom*. According to Beale's *Semple* (1894), page 102, at a meeting of the General Committee at Williams's meeting-house, Goochland County, March 7, 1778, one of the questions discussed was :

"Whether the new Federal Constitution, which had now lately made its appearance in public, made sufficient provision for the secure enjoyment of religious liberty ; on which, it was agreed unanimously that, in the opinion of the General Committee, *it did not*."

And so from now on Virginia Baptists through their General Committee began to work as steadily for *Religious Freedom* as they had formerly done for *Religious Equality*, and it may be well here to permit *The New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia*, Edition 1907, Vol. I, page 472, to give its testimony :

"Not content with being chiefly instrumental in securing religious equality in Virginia, Virginia Baptists watched closely the forming of the Federal Constitution and were instrumental in procuring the insertion of Art. I, which prohibits Congress from taking any cognizance of religion."

At this point it seems proper and even desirable to insert the first amendment to the Federal Constitution, representing, as it does, the culmination of a severe and long drawn-out struggle and which, it will be seen, guarantees to the citizens of the United States freedom of religion, freedom of speech, right to assemble and right to petition. It is as follows :

ARTICLE I

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

And so it at last came about that the cause of Absolute Religious Freedom in the new world beginning with Roger Williams in Rhode Island in 1636, then taken up by Clarke, Crandall and others in Massachusetts—among them Obadiah Holmes who in 1651 was cruelly whipped on Boston Commons—was later espoused by Virginia Baptists as their natural heritage and by them carried to a triumphant conclusion with the adoption of the above article granting religious freedom to everyone living in the United States—and may the day speedily come when its blessings will be enjoyed by all people, *the world over*.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CHARACTER OF THESE MEN

Let no one think for a moment that these men were religious enthusiasts, who were propelled by a momentary *impulse*; they were men of strong faith and abiding convictions. Impulsive people are borne hither and thither on any breeze and are more giddy than the most fluffy feather blown by the wind.

Today they are tossed on the billows of some wild theory or fancy, tomorrow they are floundering in the deep. Today they are thoughtlessly acting upon the impulse of the moment or as their inclinations lead them, tomorrow they are full of regrets and remorse over the blunders of yesterday. But these Baptist preachers were men whose will sat supreme on the throne and whose feelings and impulses were at their feet; or, at least they were like dutiful children—obedient to their wills. Such men can not be blown about by every wind of doctrine, nor made to swerve from the well-defined course they have mapped for themselves.

Neither were these preachers animated by *sentiment* only, for sentiments are but the gentle breezes which stir the surface of life's ocean into tiny ripples of emotion, but these men lived by convictions which are the deep and unseen springs that feed life's ocean of practical endeavor. They had decision of character; they knew what was right and were firm in doing it. They had independence of character; they thought and acted for themselves. They had constancy of purpose, pursuing a straightforward course regardless of all the threats of persecution. They had a love and an ardor for the Lord's cause which no amount of persecution could cool or diminish. Men of such industry, of such integrity, of such high principles, of such sterling honesty of purpose, always command the spontaneous homage and respect of mankind. It is natural to believe in such men, to have confidence in them, to imitate them and to follow them.

These men were not *dreamers*, but doers. It is oftentimes not sufficient to wait for opportunity, even though improved when it

has come. We must not only strike while the iron is hot, but make the iron hot by striking.

If opportunity does not present herself we must do our best to compel her attendance. This is what these Baptist preachers did. They could not sit supinely by and wait for a change in religious sentiment, or for a favorable interpretation of the laws, but they set to work to bring these things to pass. Circumstances did not mould them; they moulded circumstances. Events did not control them; they controlled events. They were eminently upright in character and speech because they were downright in both. They knew what they were about and they set about it with a glad heart, a ready will, and an approving conscience. They felt that they were engaged in a wonderful work and were determined to do it in a faithful way. They had laid hold of an eternal truth and did not mean to let go until the truth prevailed.

In the record of the Dark Ages, with all its crudeness, fine specimens of manhood may be found here and there whose characters had been formed by *adhering to the law* of some institution established solely for the public welfare; but here in Virginia in the eighteenth century were these men who developed magnificent manhood by *opposing the law* of the land. God-fearing, self-respecting men do not like to subject themselves to the whims and caprices of vacillating civil authorities upon any matter whatsoever, much less upon one relating to a man's conscience and to his inalienable right. And while our Baptist preachers did not want to defy the law of the land, yet they chose to be governed by a higher law and suffer the consequences. "Experience is the best teacher," and these preachers had ample opportunity to test and know the temper of the authorities in this respect. In 1747 the General Court granted a Presbyterian preacher, Samuel Davies, a license to preach at four different places in and about Hanover County, but it is expressly stated by Dr. Sprague in his *Annals of the American Pulpit*, that it was done "chiefly through the influence of the Governor; though, at that time, there were pending several civil suits against Dissenting ministers, for holding religious worship in a manner not recognized by the law of the Province." In 1769 James Ireland, a Baptist, had great difficulty in securing a license from the same court for even one preaching station in Culpeper County, while another Baptist

preacher was refused a license for Richmond County because one had already been granted the Presbyterians; and the Middlesex court absolutely refused in 1771 to grant a license for James McKan's home as a place for dissenters to preach. Therefore with the County and General Court refusing a license for preaching stations, these Baptist preachers must either cease to preach altogether or go ahead and preach without legal sanction. With reference to this opposition to the existing laws of the land, as they related to marriage, a word of explanation is found in Semple's *History* (Beale's Revision, 1894), page 89, which is as follows:

"For a set of preachers to proceed to solemnize the rites of matrimony without any law to authorize them might at first view appear incorrect, and, indeed, censurable; but we are informed that they were advised to this measure by Mr. Patrick Henry as being the most certain method of obtaining the law. It succeeded. It is, however, still questionable *whether this was not doing evil that good might come.*"

These soldiers of King Immanuel, of whom we write, had enlisted for the war and expected to meet the foe; in this they were not disappointed, for bonds and imprisonments were their portion again and again. Fines and penalties were measured out to them with a generous hand. It takes "A stout heart for a stiff brea," according to a Scottish proverb, and these men not only encountered a "stiff brea," but a full-grown hurricane of hatred, malice and chicanery; but be it said to their everlasting honor, there was not a faint heart among them. And this is the more remarkable when we consider that most of these men were unlearned as the world counts learning. They were in this respect very much like the original twelve apostles. Yet they confounded the elite of the land, and it must have been a source of much chagrin to the Parsons of that day that they could not silence them. Numerous instances might be cited to show how hard the leaders of the Establishment tried to persuade these dissenters to "reform," but they were all like Palissy the potter, who when Henry III, of France, tried to induce him to give up his Protestantism, replied:

"The Guisarts, all your people, and yourself, cannot compel a potter to bow down to images of clay."

It is not at all surprising that the strict ritualists and ceremonialists of that day found it hard to understand, not to say embrace, a religion so diametrically opposite to that which they had imbibed with their mother's milk. On the other hand it must be remembered that these Baptist preachers could not be indifferent to what they themselves believed, not could they suppose all doctrines and beliefs to be alike. They were bound to search into the will of the Creator, so far as it had been revealed; to study and determine their obligation to Him, and to be earnestly concerned for the promotion of His cause in the world. A new structure was being built in the world and they were much concerned about the material that would go into it. It was different from any that had ever been employed. Gold, iron, stone, commerce, nobility, and caste—all had been tried in the old world and proven to be as unstable as the sands of Sahara. This temple which our Baptist forefathers helped to build, was to rest upon new material—Ideas. Emerson has said that "the soul of God is poured into the world through the thoughts of men. The world," he says, "stands upon ideas, not upon iron or cotton; and the iron of iron, the fire of fire, and the ether and source of all elements is moral force. As cloud on cloud, as snow on snow, as the bird rests on the air and the planet rests on space in its flight, so do nations of men and their institutions rest on thought."

These preachers were anxious for their ideas to be incorporated in this new temple, but be it remembered, that they had no desire to triumph over others, or to persecute them in any way because they differed from them in *thought*, or *opinion*, for *this* they regarded as the greatest disgrace to reason, religion and humanity. The pages of history are dotted with futile attempts to establish an exact outward uniformity in religious practice. All the imprisonments and persecutions in Virginia, like the racks, gibbets, fires, and other instruments of torture in the old world, failed of their design for the mind has always risen superior to them. Yea, all these sanguinary methods, instead of repressing the truth have supported and strengthened it while it has injured the cause of the opposers and oppressors. "Truth is like a torch, the more 'tis shook it shines." One lawyer had the practical sense and the foresight to call the court's attention to this universally accepted truth, by saying that to persecute these men would be

like treading upon a bed of camomile which is said to flourish the more it is trodden upon. But the authorities were obdurate and bonds and imprisonments were meted out in many counties. Thyme and the palm are said to grow strongest when pressed down, and the persecution these preachers received no doubt caused them to develop stronger and sturdier characters than would have been possible without it.

These persecuted and imprisoned preachers had to bear much hardship and endure much severe suffering. But they must have been comforted with the thought that the ransomed hosts came up to their place of high honor and privilege through "great tribulation." In Paul's letter to the Romans he admonished those disciples to be "patient in tribulation," and these preachers must have heeded that admonition for they became veritable paragons of patience. God says to the fruit tree, "bloom and bear," but to the human heart, "bear and bloom." "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress," is the striking way the Psalmist puts it. And the experience of these Baptist preachers of Virginia tallies with that of Israel's sweetest singer. When it first "gat hold" of the Psalmist he was filled with gloomy forebodings, and when the officers of the land first "gat hold" of these preachers thrusting them into close confinement, thereby abridging their liberties and curtailing their usefulness, it must have appeared indeed dark and inexplicable. And yet we know now it all turned out to the glory of God and was the means of their enlargement. What seemed to shut them in was in reality the means of opening them out. If the strong arm of the law had not seized these men and confined them in the county gaols of Colonial Virginia, some of them would never have been heard of beyond the narrow confines of their own immediate neighborhood. But their confinement was their enlargement. Their lives were like a boat that has been sailing on the broad waters of a canal. Then it passes out of the sunny openness of a wide usefulness into the deep imprisoned walls of a lock. There is a closed gate in front and a closed gate behind. But into this locked area the waters from a higher level begin to pour silently and imperceptibly, the boat begins to rise in its place of imprisonment, soon the forward gate is opened, and the boat moves out on an elevated plane. Every life has its imprisoned locks, but those of these preachers seemed to be more

so than ours of this day and generation. God shuts us all in that he may open us out. These Virginia Baptist ministers were confined that they might be enlarged. Their bodies were held like a boat, in the narrowest and gloomiest confinement. But God lifted them up out of circumstances which seemed to crush them down and hem them in on all sides.

CHAPTER XVII

BODY IMPRISONMENT

"I send you herewith the body of —————." Place the name of a Baptist preacher in that blank space and you will have the formal manner in which the mittimus read which accompanied him and other Virginia Baptist preachers when they were transferred from the court room to the county gaols in Colonial Virginia for preaching the Gospel. Putting preachers in prison for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ is indeed a strange form of persecution. But "Truth is always strange, stranger than fiction," and such severe measures have been meted out again and again in the world's history. Joseph in prison in Egypt, Daniel in prison in Babylon, Jeremiah in prison in Jerusalem, Paul in prison in Phillippi, Peter in prison in Jerusalem, are but a few of the many examples of those who suffered imprisonment in ancient times for the truth's sake. Passing over the Dark Ages when the candle of the Lord burned but dimly and all the records are shrouded in more or less obscurity, we come to the noted case of John Bunyan in the seventeenth century, who was confined in Bedford jail for twelve long years. A few years later William Penn, the founder of the State of Pennsylvania, was thrice thrown into prison. During his first imprisonment in London Tower he coined the now well-known and oft-repeated expression :

"No Cross, No Crown."

This custom of confining preachers crossed the Atlantic, and more than a score and a half of Virginia Baptist Ministers were incarcerated during Colonial days in the county gaols of their own State. They could bear personal testimony to the prevalence of this particular and peculiar form of persecution in the Old Dominion during the ten years immediately preceding the Revolutionary War and extending to a period of time about two years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Some of these preachers were not simply arrested and imprisoned one time, but they could say with the Apostle Paul "in prisons more frequent."

Our Virginia preachers were treated shamefully and in many instances severely and barbarously, but they were never *whipped* by a decree of court. That is to say, there is no record that we have been able to find where a Virginia preacher suffered under the lash by *civil authority*. James Ireland expected it. He says, "I expected every court, to be brought out to the whipping post before the gazing multitude: I sat down and counted the cost, and believed, through Christ strengthening me, I could suffer all things for his sake. It appeared that their power did not reach so far, or it would have been executed." A case of brutal whipping *did* occur in Massachusetts, when Obadiah Holmes, a Baptist preacher was tied to the whipping-post in Boston and publicly whipped. His clothes were stripped off, and thirty lashes sank into his naked flesh, the executioner striking with all his might, and spitting on his hands three times, so that he might do his utmost. Mr. Holmes' flesh was so badly torn and cut that for days and weeks he "could take no rest but as he lay upon his knees and elbows, not being able to suffer any part of his body to touch the bed whereon he lay."

But in Virginia those in authority did not go so far. It is true some Virginia Baptist preachers were whipped, clubbed, insulted, and in many ways maltreated, but a good deal of it was by the riffraff of society, and not by the direct sanction of the civil powers. John Waller was severely whipped by the sheriff of Caroline County, but there is no evidence that it was done by the court's order. Some preachers were pulled down out of the pulpit by the hairs of their head, the nape of the neck, a leg, or an arm; doors were broken open and pulpits and tables smashed to pieces in order to prevent preaching, break up a meeting, or intimidate these men of God. Our Baptist forefathers had their simple worship ruthlessly and barbarously interrupted in many and various ways, and these interruptions were the more noticeable when compared with the precision and decorum of other meetings of that day. The ingenuity of their persecutors was taxed to its maximum to devise ways and means whereby they might interfere with the peaceable exercise of a God-given right.

But it would not be right to charge *all* these deeds of violence to the rulers of the land. They bore a considerable part in many of these outrageous procedures, enough indeed to cover them with

odium for all time to come; but we do not charge them with all the crimes that were perpetrated against these men. Such things are the inevitable attendants of every reform movement. It is true that these interruptions to meetings, and the lawless acts of the populace towards these preachers and their services may have been winked at by the civil powers and ecclesiastical authorities, and thus the rough element in society grew much bolder in the perpetration of all such crimes. The magistrates must have condoned such lawless deeds for there is no record, so far as we know, of the slightest reprimand being given any of these lawless individuals. With the full assurance that no matter what indignities they heaped upon these poor dissenting ministers the civil authorities would taken no cognizance of it, they doubtless became more daring and aggressive than they otherwise would have been.

The authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, have enough to answer for without charging them with the whole catalogue of crimes against these preachers:

“About thirty preachers were honoured with a dungeon, and a few others beside. Some of them were imprisoned as often as four times, besides all the mobs and perils they went through. The dragon roared with hideous peals, but was not *red*—the beast appeared formidable, but was not *scarlet-coloured*. Virginia soil has never been stained with vital blood for conscience sake.”

This quotation which seems to be copied from Leland's *Virginia Chronicle*, may be found in Benedict's *General History*, Vol. II, page 73. Some blood, yea, much blood, *was* shed by these preachers and consecrated laymen, but it was not “vital blood.”

Near the close of his wonderful career, Pericles said, “I have caused no one to wear crepe.” This remark of the man who built the city of Athens, may be applied with equal propriety and truthfulness to those who built the Establishment in Virginia. They did not “cause any one to wear crepe,” but they did cause many to wear a sad countenance and carry a heavy heart. This does not mean that these preachers went to prison that way, for all the evidence seems to indicate that they considered themselves highly favored in being honored with a jail sentence for their Master's sake, and we know that they sometimes sang as they

journeyed to the jail; but in our consideration of their experiences we are not to forget the loved ones at home—perhaps an aged mother, a faithful wife and dependent children, to say nothing of the members of their respective churches who would miss them sorely. No matter how exalted the ideal that kept men in jail rather than violate their consciences, yet those at home would miss them and would often wear a sad countenance and carry a heavy heart.

Bonds and imprisonment were the portions measured out to these men by Virginia's "Gentlemen Justices." They must have thought that imprisonments would curtail the usefulness of these preachers and retard the progress of the dissenters: but it rather turned out to their good and to the Glory of God. The Word preached behind prison bars seemed to have greater weight and to reach farther and penetrate deeper than when proclaimed from the open pulpit. And then, too, the preachers bore such treatment so heroically and with such great patience and fortitude, that this added to their popularity and aided their cause. So after all perhaps they could have said to the civil authorities as Joseph said to his brethren, "So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God."

If it be asked why all that illustrious company of Baptist preachers should be singled out from all the other dissenters as "deserving the pain and ignominy of arrests, bonds, imprisonments, and stripes," the reason is not far to seek. Our Baptist fathers believed, according to Dr. Geo. W. Beale, who was regarded as most excellent authority, on such subjects, that the:

"Right to preach the Gospel was inalienable and divine, quite beyond the pale of the court's jurisdiction or government control. Therefore, whilst others took the prescribed oaths, subscribed to the necessary articles, and secured licenses from the court for certain preaching-places, many Baptist preachers proceeded to preach, as opportunities offered, without consulting the general court and regardless of legal sanction. It was this bold and intrepid action that aroused against them the resentment of the clergymen, the rage of the magistrates, and the terror of the courts. It was this that led the fathers of our faith to suffer the stings of

the cruel lash, and to preach to their fellow-men through the grated windows of our county jails."

A few of our Baptist preachers did take the formal oath of allegiance and subscribed to the "Articles of Religion," in order to secure a license to preach at certain places—usually only one place in a county being granted to a preacher or sect. Perhaps some readers will be curious to know just what the oath of allegiance was, and what was meant by subscribing to the "Articles of Religion," and for their benefit copies of these legal documents have been included in an early chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII

SOUL IMPRISONMENT

Body imprisonment is bad enough, but soul imprisonment is much more to be dreaded. In the *Life and Times of James Madison*, Mr. Wm. C. Rives said: "There is no form of tyranny so revolting to the feelings of human nature as that which is exercised over the mind of man; and no species of mental tyranny so odious as that which seeks to enslave the conscience in matters of religion."

The bodies of these preachers were confined frequently in dark and loathsome dungeons, but their souls were invariably free and joyous. When Paul and Silas were in prison at Phillippi with "their feet fast in the stocks," their souls went forth in prayer and praise. When the body of John Bunyan was in Bedford jail, his soul went forth on that glorious Pilgrimage to the celestial city. His body was in jail, but his soul, the real John Bunyan, was in the interpreter's house, the house beautiful, and on the delectable mountains.

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for a hermitage.
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone that soar above
Enjoy such liberty."

Richard Lovelace the English poet and author of the above lines (which so strikingly express the situation of our Baptist preachers in Colonial Virginia, who were imprisoned for preaching the gospel), knew full well what he was singing about. He was a colonel in the English army of Charles I, and after spending the whole of his fortune in support of the royal cause died in indigence. But before his demise Parliament had him put in

prison twice and it was during one of these periods of confinement that he wrote the lines quoted.

No Roman Emperor could imprison the Apostle Paul's soul and no Virginia magistrate had the power to imprison the soul of Ireland, Waller, Weatherford, Webber, Greenwood, or any of that galaxy of heroes of the Cross. Madame Guyon found the same marvelous power to fly beyond all prison walls (a power which belongs to every sincere Christian), and she thus refers to it:

"My cage confines me round,
Abroad I can not fly;
But tho my wing is closely bound,
My heart's at liberty.
My prison walls can not control
The flight, the freedom, of the soul.

"Oh! it is good to soar
These bolts and bars above,
To Thee whose purpose I adore,
Whose providence I love.
And in thy mighty will to find
The joy, the freedom, of the mind."

The world is indebted to the prison for many of God's best and most useful gifts to humanity. The book that has been translated into more languages than any other, the Bible alone excepted, was born in Bedford jail. "We are not afraid to say," says Macaulay, "that though there were many clever men in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were only two great creative minds. One of these produced *Paradise Lost*, and the other *Pilgrim's Progress*. And this statement of the great English historian is far more remarkable and worthy of our notice when we recall the distressing fact that both these men of masterful mind were held in grievous bondage—one bound by prison walls and the other shut in by blindness.

Martin Luther translated the Scriptures and wrote upon the Galatians, &c., while he was in Wartburg Castle, preaching every Sunday in the Castle. Rutherford in Aberdeen Castle wrote his beautiful "Letters," and Paul was a prisoner when he penned a number of his "Epistles," that have been so helpful to all mankind.

Now our attention turns to one of greatest blessings which humanity enjoys and that is, *Religious Liberty*. It may not have been born in the county jails of old Virginia, but it was there that it received a mighty impetus and grew to maturity. Roger Williams incorporated the idea into the laws of the State of Rhode Island, but it seems to have been practically unknown elsewhere until the battle was fought and won in our Virginia jails.

The battle for *Religious Liberty* was fought and won largely by Virginia Baptists, but there are those now who have risen up in recent years and laid claim to their laurels.

Seven wealthy towns contend for Homer dead,
Through which the living Homer begged his bread.

Lengthy treatises have been written to prove their right to this distinction, but the well-informed public can not be hoodwinked into believing such a fallacy. The evidence is too strong on the side of the Baptists. The proof is too conclusive. The Baptists' claim is supported by the most indisputable proofs in the form of court records and well established historical facts. Baptist preachers were imprisoned because they would not surrender what they regarded as an inalienable right to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, and because they would not refrain from proclaiming the gospel of salvation whenever and wherever the occasion presented itself, and the Holy Spirit seemed to prompt it. They wrote a more enduring chapter in the world's history than they knew. It is a chapter which the Baptists of this day and generation may point back to with pardonable pride, for our Baptist fathers in insisting upon their rights did not ask for any peculiar privileges for themselves. While seeking for themselves unrestricted freedom to possess and observe the religion taught in the New Testament, they insisted upon equal freedom in religious matters for all others, whether Quakers, Catholics, Jews, or infidels. "Equal rights to all and special privileges to none," was the slogan during this fight.

The writing of this chapter must have caused much bodily suffering and physical as well as mental privations. Their confinement in "close jail" must have been very trying yet they never faltered, but kept right on. They left an indelible impression upon the pages of the world's history, and we are grateful that

they have told us how they felt while they were enduring such persecution for the Truth's sake. One is said to have been "not without consolation"; another speaks of having "no unpleasant season"; another is said to have "enjoyed much of the Divine presence"; and still another looked upon his imprisonment as a place of honor and exaltation and dated his letters from, "My Palace in Culpeper jail."

They proved again and again that the language of the old hymn was right:

"While blest with a sense of His love,
A palace a toy would appear;
And prisons would palaces prove
If Jesus would dwell with me there."

The Lord was with Joseph while he was in prison, an angel paid a visit to the Apostle Peter when he was placed in the inner prison, and we may well believe that Jesus was present in the cells of many Virginia jails where his faithful servants were imprisoned for preaching His unsearchable riches. Happiness may have sent her equipage, her pomp and her train to the palace of the Governor while she herself trudged along the dusty highway *incognito* to keep a private appointment with contentment and partake of a dinner of bread and water in a Virginia jail. Christ's presence can turn any prison into a palace and the darkest dungeon into a paradise.

While in prison these men had ample time for prayer and meditation, and these exercises of the soul, not growth of the body, make the perfect man. During these long days of enforced silence and confinement they had ample time to form their plans well, to lay out their work, to breathe many prayers for victory, and to swear eternal fealty to the high purpose of right.

CHAPTER XIX

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

It is not only interesting but a strange co-incidence that the first draft of the statute establishing Religious Freedom was drawn by *five* men in the same town where the first *five* Baptists were imprisoned for preaching the Gospel according to their way of looking at it. That unique celebration in Fredericksburg in 1932 brought out this fact, to which the author of this volume called attention in the following article sent to the *Religious Herald* at the time:

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN VIRGINIA—WHO WON THE BATTLE?

"The celebration in Fredericksburg on Sunday, October 16, 1932, was unique and interesting. It was the first of its kind ever held in this country, and was in commemoration of the work of the men who brought into being that great legislative instrument which caused the separation of Church and State in the United States. A handsome monument was unveiled and appropriate exercises were held in which sixteen different denominations took part, or were represented. The Governor of the State, the Hon. John Garland Pollard, unveiled the handsome memorial which stands in the Fredericksburg High School grounds. An editorial in the *Times-Dispatch* contained this statement:

"'Christianity, a religion born of the beautiful life and philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth, the central fact of which is love, by the evil contrivance of man, has been through the ages distorted and made a provocation of incalculable cruelty.

"'Particularly since the sixteenth century, when there was a religious revolution in Europe, history has been a record of the horrible strife of Christian against Christian. The blood of uncounted thousands has been poured out in that unholy war. The conflicts have been characterized by incredible cruelty on the part of both factions, and the bitter

resentments kindled in that savage conflict are today a part of our religious heritage.

* * * * *

“The tolerant philosophers who framed this great republic were well aware of the agonies which have been inflicted on the world by religious hate. They were determined to dedicate this land to the noble principle of absolute religious freedom.’

“Yes, thank God, these ‘tolerant philosophers’ were well aware of the agonies which had been inflicted *on the world* by religious hate, and they must have known something of the Baptist ministers and laymen who were persecuted, whipped and imprisoned *right here in old Virginia* for ‘conscience’s sake.’

“But I wonder if these *five* men knew that the first case of actual imprisonment of a Baptist minister in Virginia for preaching the Gospel occurred in the very town where they were meeting? On the fourth of June, 1768, the following men were arrested at Craig’s meeting-house and carried to jail in Fredericksburg:

John Waller,
Lewis Craig,
James Chiles,
James Reed,
William Mash.

“Other imprisonments followed in various counties in the State: Culpeper led the list with perhaps eleven or more imprisonments, Caroline County authorities incarcerated nine in their jail, Chesterfield seven, Spotsylvania five, Middlesex four, Orange four or more, Essex three, King and Queen two, Fauquier one, Fairfax one, Amherst one, and Accomac one. But, mark you, it was in Fredericksburg that this ‘diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution,’ as James Madison called it, commenced. And strange to say, nine years later, in the same town, ‘in a black room’ *five* men assembled and for hours were in conference. When they emerged from that room they brought with them the first draft of the statute establishing religious freedom. The date

of this memorable meeting was October 16, 1777, and the five 'tolerant philosophers' were:

Thomas Jefferson,
George Mason,
Edmund Pendleton,
George Wythe,
Thomas Ludwell Lee.

"I wonder if they realized that they were trying to put a stop to the very thing that had started right there in Fredericksburg?

"I wonder if these five men remembered that five preachers had been confined in the public jail of that very town for 'conscience's sake,' and that they preached from the grated windows of their cell?

"I wonder if they paid a visit to the Fredericksburg jail, which was a stone structure and so strongly built that William Byrd said: 'The walls of which are strong enough to hold Jack Sheppard, if he had been transported hither?' (Jack Sheppard was an English highwayman and robber.)

"I wonder if they knew that other men had been kept in jail for months and months at a time 'for publishing their



MONUMENT IN FREDERICKSBURG TO THE ACT FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

religious sentiments, which, in the main, are very orthodox,' as James Madison termed it?

"I wonder if they knew that John Waller was semi-officially whipped so severely with a horse-whip until he was in a gore of blood, and carried the scars with him down into South Carolina and into his grave?

"I wonder if they were cognizant of the fact that one of the 'gentleman justices' of Chesterfield county had erected a high brick wall around the jail to prevent the preachers confined therein from preaching the Gospel to those who followed them even to prison?

"I wonder if they knew that a judge on the bench had told a Baptist preacher when he sent him to jail for perhaps the third time, that 'you will lie in jail until you rot?'

"Oh! I wonder if they knew that an effort was made to blow up a poor preacher with gun-powder while he was in jail, and when this failed the jailer and the jail physician entered into a conspiracy to poison him—and came very near succeeding?



TABLET ON MONUMENT TO THE ACT OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
at Fredericksburg, Virginia

"Oh! I cannot help wondering if these *five* 'tolerant philosophers' and American patriots knew the atrocities that were committed against their fellowmen by the inhabitants of this Old Commonwealth, when they drafted the first statute proclaiming religious liberty and separation of Church and State?

"The *Times-Dispatch* is entirely correct when in this same editorial referred to at the beginning of this communication, it is there stated that 'religious freedom and the separation of Church and State':

" 'IS CERTAINLY AMERICA'S GREATEST CONTRIBUTION
TO CIVILIZATION.'

"*But who gave religious freedom to America?* Roger Williams, a Baptist, incorporated the idea in the laws of the State of Rhode Island, but it seems to have been unknown everywhere else until the battle was fought and won in our Virginia jails. So it has come to pass that the State which has furnished more Presidents of the United States than any other has also given the world that principle which has perhaps blessed more lands than any other. Religious Liberty is now regarded as the most inestimable boon to mankind.

" 'Seven wealthy towns contended for Homer dead,
Through which the living Homer begged his bread.'

"This battle for religious liberty was fought and won largely by Virginia Baptists, but there are others who have risen up in recent years and laid claim to their laurels. Let us keep the record straight. *Who gave religious freedom to America and the world?*

L. PEYTON LITTLE."

Williamsburg, Va.

(From the *Religious Herald*, of October 10, 1932, with some slight typographical errors corrected.)

The monument referred to in the above communication to the *Religious Herald* is constructed of stones from historic church buildings belonging to the sixteen participating faiths; and the bronze tablet bears the following inscription:

“This Memorial
Marks the Site of a Celebration
on October 16, 1932
by Representatives of the
Leading Religious Faiths in
America, Commemorative of the
Religious Character of
George Washington,
Whose Boyhood Home Town Was
Fredericksburg;
and of the Separation of Church
and State, as the Virginia
‘Bill for Establishing
Religious Freedom’
Was Outlined by a Committee
Consisting of
Thomas Jefferson, George Mason,
Edmund Pendleton, George Wythe
and Thomas Ludwell Lee
Which Met in This City on
January 13, 1777

Erected by the State Commission
of Conservation and Development
1932.”

HOW SOME BAPTISTS WERE PERSECUTED

Afferman, John	Middlesex	Cruelly beaten—incapacitated for work.
Alderson, John	Botetourt	Jailed for (?).
Ammon, Thomas	Culpeper	Jailed for preaching.
Anthony, Joseph	Chesterfield	Jailed for preaching. "Three months."
Baker, Elijah	Accomac	Pelted with apples and stones.
Baker, Elijah	Accomac	Banishment attempted.
Baker, Elijah	Accomac	Jailed for preaching. Fifty-six days.
Banks, Adam	Culpeper	Jailed for (?).
Barrow, David	Nansemond	Ducked and nearly drowned by 20 men.
Barrow, David	Nansemond	Dragged from the house and driven away.
Burrus, John	Caroline	Jailed for preaching.
Chambers, Thomas	Orange	Jailed for (?).
Chastain, Rane	Chesterfield	Ordered to leave the county, or go to jail.
Chastain, Rane	Chesterfield	Commanded to take a dram, or be whipped.
Chiles, James	Spotsylvania	Jailed for preaching. "Forty-three days."
Choning, Bartholomew	Caroline	Jailed for (?).
Clay, Eleazer	Chesterfield	Man rode up to cowhide him—failed.
Clay, John	(?)	Jailed for preaching.
Corbley, John	Culpeper	Frequently taken from pulpit—beaten.
Corbley, John	Orange	Jailed for preaching.
Corbley, John	Culpeper	Jailed for preaching.
Craig, Elijah	Culpeper	Jailed for preaching. "One month."
Craig, Elijah	Culpeper	Jailed for preaching. Duration unknown.
Craig, Elijah	Orange	Jailed for preaching. Seventeen or 18 days.
Craig, Elijah	Orange	Jailed for preaching. "A considerable time."
Craig, Joseph	Spotsylvania	Apprehended, but escaped.
Craig, Joseph	Orange	Presented for being absent from church.
Craig, Lewis	Spotsylvania	Indicted, tried, but not imprisoned.

Craig, Lewis.....	Spotsylvania.....	Jail for preaching. "Four weeks."
Craig, Lewis.....	Caroline.....	Arrested and required to give bond.
Craig, Lewis.....	Caroline.....	Jailed for preaching. "Three months."
Craig, Lewis.....	Caroline.....	Carried to Williamsburg on habeas corpus.
Delaney, John.....	Culpeper	Jailed for permitting a man to pray.
Eastin, Augustine.....	Chesterfield.....	Jailed for preaching.
Elkins, Richard.....	Pittsylvania.....	Two men started for warrant. Frightened.
Falkner, Richard	Middlesex	Arrested but released.
Fristoe, Daniel	Fauquier	Service interrupted by curses and silly antics.
Fristoe, Daniel	Stafford.....	Warrant issued but not executed.
Fristoe, Daniel	Stafford.....	Gun presented to his breast.
Fristoe, William.....	Stafford.....	Application for warrant for him refused.
Fristoe, William.....	Stafford.....	Pursued by man with gun, but escaped.
Fristoe, William.....	Stafford.....	Taken by a warrant, went to Philadelphia.
Goolrich, James.....	Caroline.....	Jailed for preaching.
Greenwood, James.....	Middlesex	Presented for being absent from church.
Greenwood, James.....	King and Queen.....	Jailed for preaching. "Sixteen days."
Greenwood, James.....	Middlesex	Jailed for preaching. "Forty - six days."
Hargate, Thomas.....	Amherst.....	Jailed for preaching.
Harriss, Samuel	Pittsylvania.....	Mightily opposed and slandered.
Harriss, Samuel	Culpeper	"You shall not preach here."
Harriss, Samuel	Culpeper	Meeting broken up by a mob.
Harriss, Samuel	N. Carolina.....	Knocked down while preaching.
Harriss, Samuel	Culpeper	Door battered down.
Harriss, Samuel	Culpeper	Arrested as a vagabond, schismatic, etc.
Harriss, Samuel	Orange.....	Pulled down and hauled about by hair, hand, etc.
Harriss, Samuel	Loudon.....	Locked up in gaol for some time.
Herndon, Edward.....	Caroline.....	Jailed for preaching.
Ireland, James.....	Culpeper	Tried to suffocate him with smoke.
Ireland, James.....	Culpeper	Tried to blow him up with gun powder.
Ireland, James.....	Culpeper	Tried to poison him. Injured for life.

Ireland, James.....	Culpeper	Drunken rowdies put in same cell with him.
Ireland, James.....	Culpeper	Threatened with a public whipping.
Ireland, James.....	Culpeper	Horses ridden over his hearers at jail.
Ireland, James.....	Culpeper	Men made their water in his face.
Ireland, James.....	Culpeper	Jailed for preaching. Five months.
Ireland, James.....	(?)	Opposition everywhere.
Kaufman, Martin.....	Shenandoah	Severely beaten with a stick.
Koontz, John.....	Shenandoah	Severely beaten with butt end of large cane.
Koontz, John.....	(?)	Met in the road and beaten.
Koontz, John.....	(?)	Arrested and started to jail, but released.
Lane, Dutton	Lunenburg.....	"Charged not to come there again."
Lane, Dutton	Pittsylvania.....	Endured much persecution.
Lane, Dutton	Pittsylvania.....	His mother beaten by his father.
Leland, John	Orange	Threatened with a gun.
Lewis, Ivion.....	Gloucester.....	"Met with violent opposition."
Lewis, Ivion.....	Essex	Arrested but not imprisoned.
Lovall, William.....	King and Queen.....	Jailed for preaching. "Sixteen days."
Lunsford, Lewis.....	Lancaster.....	
Lunsford, Lewis.....	Northumberland	His preaching interrupted by mob violence and legal proscription.
Lunsford, Lewis.....	Richmond	
Lunsford, Lewis.....	Westmoreland	
Lunsford, Lewis.....	Richmond	Summoned and required to give bond.
McClannahan, William.....	Culpeper	Jailed for preaching.
Major, Richard.....	Fairfax	Warrants issued but not executed.
Major, Richard.....	Fauquier	Warrants issued at Bull Run—defended—Giants.
Major, Richard.....	Fauquier	Man went to meeting determined to kill him.
Major, Richard.....	Fauquier	Mob so outrageous—nearly pulled to pieces.
Marshall, Daniel.....	Pittsylvania.....	"Endured much persecution."
Marshall, William.....	Fauquier	Arrested but they failed to jail him.
Mash, William	Spotsylvania.....	Jailed for preaching. "Forty-three days."
Mastin, Thomas.....	Orange.....	Presented by grand jury.
Maxwell, Thomas.....	Culpeper	Jailed for preaching.
Mintz, Edward	Nansemond.....	Ducked and driven away in his wet clothes.
Moffett, Anderson	Culpeper	Jailed for preaching.

Moore, Jeremiah.....	(?)	Brutally assaulted by a mob.
Moore, Jeremiah.....	Fairfax	Apprehended and carried before magistrate.
Moore, Jeremiah.....	Fairfax	Jailed for preaching, perhaps three times.
Morton, Elijah	Orange.....	Ousted as a Justice because he was a Baptist.
Mullins, William	Middlesex	Presented for being absent from church.
Murphy, Joseph	(?)	Carried before magistrate, not imprisoned.
Picket, John.....	Fauquier	Great opposition from mobs and magistrates.
Picket, John.....	Culpeper	Misrepresented by Parson before congregation.
Picket, John.....	Culpeper	Jailed for preaching.
Picket, John.....	Fauquier	Jailed for preaching. Three months or more.
Pitman, Hipkins.....	Caroline.....	Arrested and threatened with whipping.
Pitman, James.....	Caroline.....	Jailed for preaching. "Sixteen days."
Pitts, Younger.....	Caroline.....	Arrested, abused and released.
Reed, James.....	(?)	Dragged off stage, kicked and cuffed about.
Reed, James.....	Spotsylvania	Jailed for preaching. "Forty-three days."
Saunders, Nathaniel	Culpeper	Summoned to appear at court for preaching.
Saunders, Nathaniel	Culpeper or Orange	Arrested and tried, but acquitted.
Saunders, Nathaniel	Culpeper	Jailed for preaching.
Shackelford, John	Essex	Jailed for preaching. "Eight days."
Spencer, Joseph	Orange.....	Jailed for preaching.
Spiller, Philip	Stafford	Jailed for preaching.
Street, Henry.....	Middlesex	Received one lash — prevented by companions.
Tanner, John.....	Chesterfield.....	Jailed for preaching. Gave bond.
Tanner, John.....	Norfleet's Ferry	Shot with a shot-gun.
Taylor, John.....	Hampshire	Suffered the "rage of mobs."
Thomas, David.....	Stafford	Violent opposition — worship prevented.
Thomas, David.....	Stafford	Ruffians armed with bludgeons to beat him.
Thomas, David.....	Culpeper or Orange	Dragged out amidst clinched fists, etc.
Thomas, David.....	Fauquier (?).....	Pulled down while preaching — dragged out.

Thomas, David.....	Culpeper or Orange	Attempt made to shoot him—battle followed.
"Three Old Men".....	Stafford	Indicted, fined, but not imprisoned.
Tinsley, David.....	Chesterfield	Jailed for preaching. Four months and 16 days.
Tribble, Andrew.....	Orange	Presented for preaching.
Waford, Thomas.....	Middlesex	Severely beaten with a whip.
Waford, Thomas.....	Essex	Arrested, searched and released.
Walker, Jeremiah.....	James City	Opposed by the "Parson and others."
Walker, Jeremiah.....	Chesterfield	Jailed for preaching.
Walker, Jeremiah.....	Chesterfield	Denied the prison bounds.
Walker, Jeremiah.....	Lunenburg	Sued in two actions for baptizing two boys.
Waller, John.....	Hanover	Hauled about by the hair of his head.
Waller, John.....	(?)	Almost rent asunder by friend and foe.
Waller, John.....	Caroline	Jerked off stage—head beaten against ground.
Waller, John.....	Caroline	Whipped severely by the Sheriff.
Waller, John.....	Caroline	Jailed for preaching. Ten days.
Waller, John.....	Essex	Jailed for preaching. Fourteen days.
Waller, John.....	Spotsylvania	Jailed for preaching. Forty-three days.
Waller, John.....	Middlesex	Jailed for preaching. Forty-six days.
Ware, James.....	Caroline	Jailed for preaching. Sixteen days.
Ware, Robert.....	Middlesex	Presented for not going to church.
Ware, Robert.....	(?)	Annoyed by men drinking and playing cards.
Ware, Robert.....	Essex	Jailed for preaching. Eight days.
Ware, Robert.....	Middlesex	Jailed for preaching. Forty-six days.
Weatherford, John.....	Chesterfield	Jailed for preaching. Five months.
Weatherford, John.....	Chesterfield	Denied the prison bounds.
Weatherford, John.....	Chesterfield	Hands slashed while preaching.
Webber, William.....	Middlesex	Jailed for preaching. Forty-six days.
Webber, William.....	Chesterfield	Jailed for preaching. Three months.
Weeks, Anderson.....	Stafford	Arrested on a warrant, but not imprisoned.
Wyley, Allen.....	Orange	Jailed for preaching. "For some-time."
Young, John.....	Caroline	Jailed for preaching. Five or six months.

COUNTIES IN WHICH THE BAPTISTS
WERE PERSECUTED

ACCOMAC: Elijah Baker.

ALEXANDRIA: Jeremiah Moore.

AMHERST: Thomas Hargate.

BOTETOURT: John Alderson.

CAROLINE: Bartholomew Choning, James Goolrich, Edward Herndon, John Burrus, John Young, Lewis Craig, John Waller, James Pitman, James Ware, Hipkins Pitman, and Younger Pitts.

CHESTERFIELD: William Webber, Joseph Anthony, David Tinsley, Augustine Eastin, John Weatherford, John Tanner, Jeremiah Walker, Rane Chastain, Eleazer Clay, and John Taylor.

CULPEPER: James Ireland, John Corbley, Elijah Craig, Thomas Ammon, Adam Banks, Thomas Maxwell, Nathaniel Saunders, Anderson Moffett, William McClannahan, John Picket, John Delaney, Samuel Harris, and David Thomas.

ESSEX: John Waller, John Shackelford, Robert Ware, Thomas Waford and Ivison Lewis.

FAIRFAX: Jeremiah Moore and Richard Major.

FAUQUIER: Daniel Fristoe, Richard Major, William Marshall, David Thomas, and John Picket.

GLOUCESTER: Ivison Lewis.

HAMPSHIRE: John Taylor.

HANOVER: John Waller.

JAMES CITY: Jeremiah Walker.

KING AND QUEEN: James Greenwood and William Loyal.

LANCASTER: Lewis Lunsford.

LOUDON: Samuel Harris.

LUNENBURG: Jeremiah Walker and Dutton Lane.

MIDDLESEX: John Waller, William Webber, James Greenwood, Robert Ware, John Afferman, Richard Falkner, William Mullins, Henry Street, and Thomas Waford.

NANSEMOND: Mr. Mintz and David Barrow.

NORTHUMBERLAND: Lewis Lunsford.

ORANGE: Elijah Craig, Allen Wyley, John Corbley, Thomas Chambers, Joseph Craig, Samuel Harris, John Leland, Thomas Mastin, Elijah Morton, Joseph Spencer, Andrew Tribble, and David Thomas.

PITTSYLVANIA: Richard Elkins, Samuel Harris, Dutton Lane, and Daniel Marshall.

RICHMOND: Lewis Lunsford.

SHENANDOAH: John Koontz and Martin Kaufman.

SPOTSYLVANIA: John Waller, Lewis Craig, James Chiles, James Reed, William Mash and Joseph Craig.

STAFFORD: Daniel Fristoe, William Fristoe, Philip Spiller, David Thomas, "Three old men," and Anderson Weeks.

WESTMORELAND: Lewis Lunsford.

EARLY BAPTIST CHURCHES IN VIRGINIA

The following list of early churches in Virginia does not comprise all that were constituted but a partial list is perhaps better than no list. These have been culled from Morgan Edward's *Volumes* and Beale's *Semple*, and the page indicated in each case. Some of these Baptist churches had, in that early day, as many as four or five branches, or preaching stations, in addition to the main church, and in many instances they had several houses of worship at these different stations.

Prince George.....	Prince George	1714	
Surry	Surry.....	1714	
Burleigh	Isle of Wight.....	1714	Beale's, p. 444
Opekon (Mill Creek).....	Berkley	1743	Beale's, p. 377
Ketoc-ton (Ketoc-tin).....	Loudon.....	Oct. 8, 1751	Edwards's, p. 59
Opekon (Millcreek)	Berkley.....	Oct. 20, 1752	Edwards's, p. 59
Smith's and Lin. Creek.....	Rockingham.....	Aug. 6, 1756	Beale's, p. 377
Smith's Creek	Shenandoah.....	Aug. 16, 1758	Edwards's, p. 59
Dan River.....	Pittsylvania	Aug., 1760	Edwards's, p. 18
Blackwater	Pittsylvania	1761	Edwards's, p. 26
Stanton	Pittsylvania	1761	Edwards's, p. 48
Broadrun.....	Fauquier.....	Dec. 3, 1762	Edwards's, p. 5
Pungo (Oak Grove).....	Princess Anne.....	1762	Beale's, p. 454
Chappawomsick.....	Stafford.....	Nov. 22, 1766	Edwards's, p. 7
Newvalley.....	Loudon.....	July 18, 1767	Edwards's, p. 15
Upper Spottsylvania	Spottsylvania.....	Nov. 20, 1767	Edwards's, p. 61
Little-river	Loudon.....	March, 1768	Edwards's, p. 12
Mountain Run.....	Orange	1768	Beale's, p. 233
Birtchcreek.....	Pittsylvania.....	Oct. 16, 1769	Edwards's, p. 3
Carter's Run	Culpeper.....	Nov. 12, 1769	Edwards's, p. 45
Lower Spottsylvania	Spottsylvania.....	Dec. 2, 1769	Edwards's, p. 31
Waller's.....	Spottsylvania.....	Dec. 2, 1769	Beale's, p. 197
Rapid-ann.....	Orange	Dec. 4, 1769	Edwards's, p. 38
Nottoway.....	Amelia.....	Dec. 10, 1769	Edwards's, p. 30
Blue Run.....	Orange	Dec. 4, 1769	Beale's, p. 240
Fall-creek	Pittsylvania.....	July, 1770	Edwards's, p. 21
Louisa	Louisa	1770	Edwards's, p. 47
Mill Creek	Pittsylvania	1770	Beale's, p. 304
Culpeper	Culpeper.....	Feb. 11, 1771	Edwards's, p. 46
Potomack	Stafford	March 26, 1771	Edwards's, p. 59
Bedford.....	Bedford	May 5, 1771	Edwards's, p. 27
Amherst (Ebenezer).....	Amherst.....	May 10, 1771	Edwards's, p. 28
Manor	Fauquier.....	Sept. 9, 1771	Edwards's, p. 15

Goochland.....	Goochland.....	Dec. 23, 1771	Edwards's, p. 41
Fiery Run.....	Culpeper.....	1771	Beale's, p. 229
County Line.....	Pittsylvania.....	1771	Beale's, p. 304
Meherrin.....	Lunenburg.....	1771	Beale's, p. 287
Powhatan.....	Powhatan.....	1771	Beale's, p. 254
Buckingham.....	Buckingham.....	May 7, 1772	Edwards's, p. 40
Leatherwood.....	Henry.....	1772	Beale's, p. 339
Racoon Swamp.....	Sussex.....	1772	Beale's, p. 443
Bluestone.....	Mecklenburg.....	1772	Beale's, p. 287
Crooken Run.....	Culpeper.....	1772	Beale's, p. 229
Pig River.....	Franklin.....	1773	Beale's, p. 339
Albemarle.....	Albemarle.....	1773	Beale's, p. 221
Battle Run.....	Culpeper.....	1773	Beale's, p. 229
Burrus.....	Caroline.....	1773	Beale's, p. 186
Malone's or Geneto.....	Mecklenburg.....	1773	Beale's, p. 287
Chesterfield.....	Chesterfield.....	1773	Beale's, p. 254
Harper's.....	Dinwiddie.....	1773	Beale's, p. 287
Catawba.....	Halifax.....	1773	Beale's, p. 303
Upper Banister.....	Pittsylvania.....	1773	Beale's, p. 304
Wynn's.....	Halifax.....	1773	Beale's, p. 303
Sappony.....	Sussex.....	1773	Beale's, p. 443
Muddy Creek.....	Powhatan.....	1774	Beale's, p. 254
Fork.....	Fluvanna.....	1774	Beale's, p. 221
Mill Swamp.....	Isle of Wight.....	1774	Beale's, p. 443
Mayo.....	Halifax.....	1774	Beale's, p. 303
Mountpony.....	Culpeper.....	1774	Beale's, p. 229
Totier.....	Albemarle.....	1775	Beale's, p. 221
Reedy Creek.....	Lunenburg.....	1775	Beale's, p. 287
Hunting Creek.....	Halifax.....	1775	Beale's, p. 303
Rowanty.....	Dinwiddie.....	1775	Beale's, p. 443
Buffaloe.....	Halifax.....	1776	Beale's, p. 303
Ready Creek.....	Brunswick.....	1776	Beale's, p. 287

DATES OF BIRTH AND DEATH

	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>
1. Jeremiah Walker	1747.....	November 20, 1792
2. Lewis Lunsford	1753.....	October 26, 1793
3. Elijah Baker	1742.....	November 6, 1798
4. Samuel Harris.....	1724.....	1799
5. David Tinsley.....	1749.....	October, 1801
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11. William Marshall.....	1735.....	1808
12. Elijah Craig.....	?	1808
13. Nathaniel Saunders.....	?	1808
14. William Webber.....	1747.....	February 29, 1808
15. Jeremiah Moore.....	1746.....	February 23, 1815
16. John Young.....	1739.....	April 16, 1817
17. Lewis Craig.....	?	1824 or 1828
18. William Fristoe.....	1742.....	August 14, 1828
19. John Shackelford.....	1750.....	1829
20. John Weatherford.....	1740.....	January 23, 1833
21. Anderson Moffett.....	?	May 14, 1835
22. John Taylor.....	1752.....	1836
23. Eleazer Clay.....	1744.....	May 2, 1836
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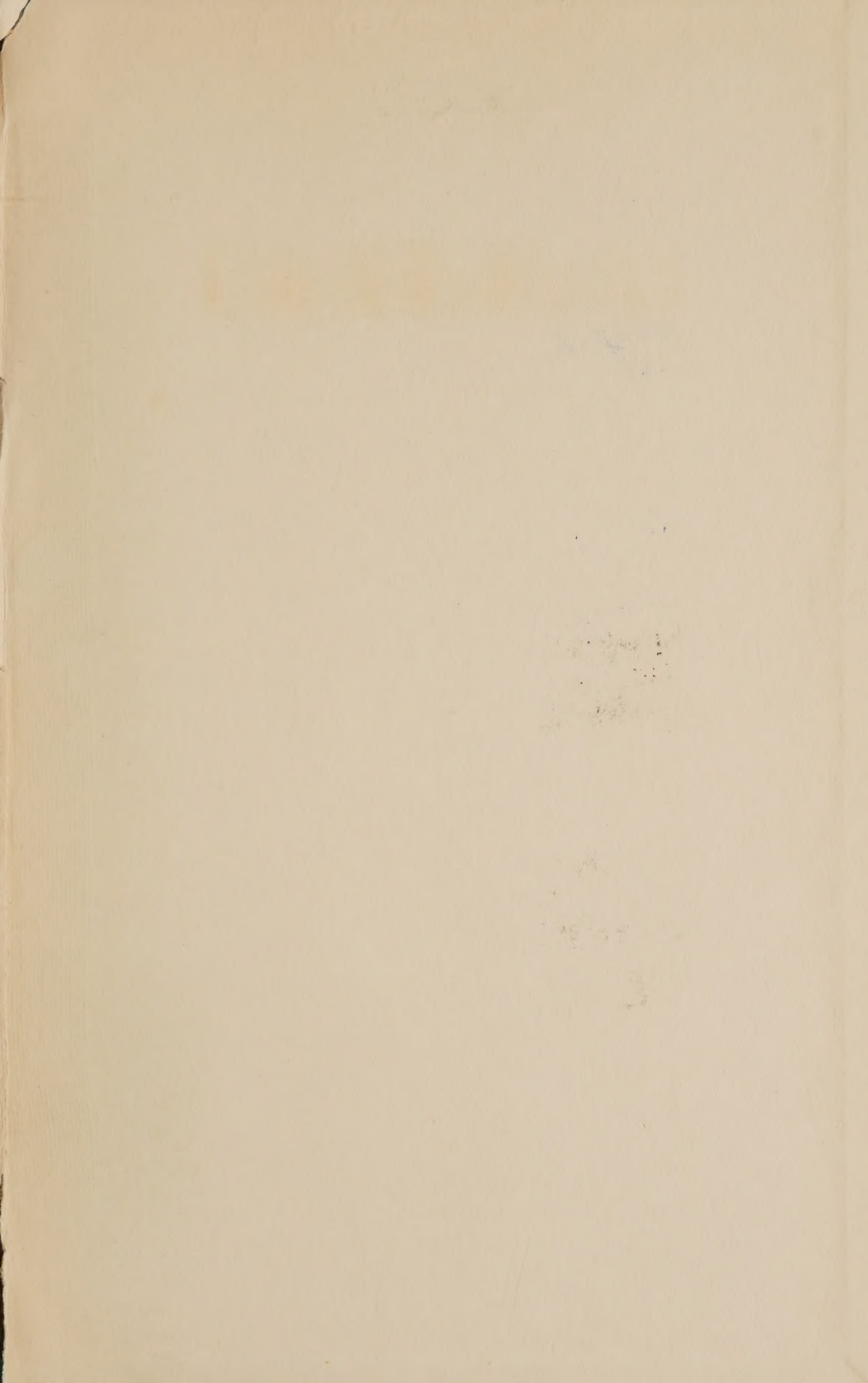
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